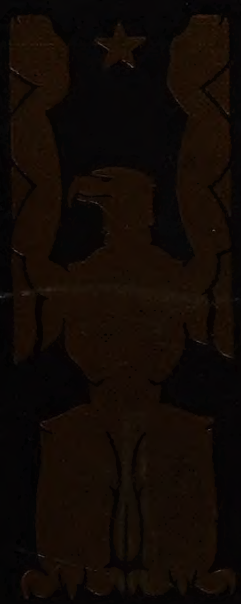

William G. Price, Jr.
Major General
Commanding 28th Division
1930

WASHINGTON · LINCOLN · WILSON

THREE WAR STATESMEN

BOOKS BY

JOHN McAULEY PALMER

ARMY OF THE PEOPLE

STATESMANSHIP OR WAR

WASHINGTON · LINCOLN · WILSON
THREE WAR STATESMEN

Philadelphia 7th
April 9th 1793

Congress having appointed a Committee consisting of Messrs Madison Ogood, Wilson, Ellsworth and myself to consider what arrangements it will be proper to adopt in the different departments with reference to a peace; I am directed by the Committee to address your Excellency on the subject of the military department.

The Committee wish your Excellency's sentiments at large on such institutions of every kind, for the interior defence of these states as may be best adapted to their circumstances and conciliated equally with economy and with the principles of our governments. In this they will be glad you will take as great latitude as you may think necessary; and will have no objection to entering into any details.

The Committee apprehend it to be the intention of Congress to lay down a general plan to be carried into execution as circumstances will permit; and that in attending to such dispositions as the immediate situation of the Country may require they are chiefly desirous of establishing good principles, that will have a permanently salutary operation.

I have the honor to be
Yr Excellency's
most Obedient Servant
Alx Hamilton
Chairman.

His Excellency
General Washington

HAMILTON'S LETTER TO WASHINGTON

Requesting him to submit a plan for the defence of this country

WASHINGTON
LINCOLN · WILSON

THREE WAR STATESMEN

BY

JOHN McAULEY PALMER
BRIG. GEN., U. S. ARMY (RETIRED)

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
GENERAL JOHN J. PERSHING

1930

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.

GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK

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GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ALLEN RICHARDS BOYD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Most of the special material upon which this book is based was obtained by the author in the Library of Congress. While he is indebted to the distinguished Librarian of Congress and to all of his staff for access to the unparalleled facilities of the library and for their unfailing courtesy, he desires to express his special obligation to some of its officials for their generous aid and assistance in his special field of research. Among these are Mr. Frederick W. Ashley, the Chief Assistant Librarian, Mr. Allen R. Boyd, Mr. Martin A. Roberts, Mr. William Adams Slade, Dr. Thomas P. Martin, Mr. David C. Mearns, Mr. V. Volta Parma, and Mr. John C. Fitzpatrick, late Acting Director of the Manuscripts Division.

The author is also greatly indebted to the Boston Public Library, the Library of Harvard College, the Connecticut Historical Society, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the New York Historical Society for their courtesy in giving him access to their books and manuscripts.

John McAuley Palmer.

Washington, D. C.
January, 1930.

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE—Enter Washington

PART I—WASHINGTON'S LEGACY

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	At Washington's Headquarters	9
II.	"Sentiments on a Peace Establishment"	19
III.	The Army of the Revolution	28
IV.	Baron von Steuben	41
V.	Citizen Soldiers or Professionals?	55
VI.	Military Academies and Manufacturies	62
VII.	How Baron Steuben Invented the National Guard	72
VIII.	The Knox Plan of 1786	84
IX.	President Washington	95
X.	The National Defence Bill of 1790	107

PART II—A LOST LEGACY

XI.	Washington in Defeat	117
XII.	Politics and Preparedness	124
XIII.	A New Gospel	136
XIV.	Mexico	152

PART III—ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S WAR

CHAPTER		PAGE
XV.	Dramatis Personæ	165
XVI.	Lincoln as a Military Dictator	177
XVII.	Promotion and Bull Run	187
XVIII.	A Young Napoleon	198
XIX.	The School of War	210
XX.	Planless Gropings	217
XXI.	The Tap-Root of War	232
XXII.	Abraham Lincoln Interferes	240
XXIII.	Trial and Error	249

PART IV—A FATEFUL INTERLUDE

XXIV.	General Upton's Researches	263
XXV.	Elihu Root	282

PART V—WOODROW WILSON'S WAR

XXVI.	Preparedness	303
XXVII.	War	325
XXVIII.	Aftermath	341
	EPILOGUE—Washington or Upton	361
	Appendices	375
	Index	405

ILLUSTRATIONS

Alexander Hamilton's Letter to George Washington
Frontispiece

PAGE

Washington's Letter to Baron Steuben 13-14

Baron Steuben's Reply 17

George Washington's "Establishment and Disposition" 386

INTRODUCTION

General Palmer has long been recognized as an authority on military history and policy. Graduating from West Point in 1892, he has been a student of our military institutions ever since. In 1911, shortly after a course at the Army Staff College, he became a member of the General Staff and was assigned to duty at the War College. While there he was a member of a Special Committee on the organization of our land forces.

In 1917 he was again at the War College and became one of a small group of officers who made hurried studies on the organization of our army for the World War. The soundness of the views presented by this board was largely due to the fact that Palmer's life-long study of military institutions had specifically prepared him for this task.

Although I had never met Palmer, his professional reputation was known to me and I selected him to accompany me to France as assistant chief of staff, in which capacity he gave valuable assistance until relieved on account of serious illness. Upon his recovery I was unwilling that he should return to the grind of staff work and assigned him to duty with troops. His war service therefore terminated in the successful command of an infantry brigade in the severe fighting north of Verdun.

After the Armistice it became apparent that Congress would find it necessary to take up the whole problem of national military organization, and I was called upon to send an officer to Washington who could represent my views. Palmer was selected and returned to General Staff duty in Washington early in 1919. After his appearance before the Senate Military Affairs Committee, Senator Wadsworth, the chair-

man, requested that Palmer be designated as its official military adviser in the preparation of the National Defense Act of 1920. This Act gave us, for the first time, a sound national defense system, and Palmer holds a high place among those who helped to accomplish that important constructive reform. In 1921, when I became Chief of the General Staff, I appointed Palmer as an aide-de-camp on my staff to assist in putting the Act into execution.

Since General Palmer's retirement from active service he has returned with new zeal to his studies of our military history. Early in his labors he had the good fortune to discover in the Library of Congress a manuscript of great historical value which had been overlooked by all of our historians. It embraces a complete treatise on the future defense of the United States and was written by General Washington himself at the close of the Revolutionary War.

This treatise is the basis of Palmer's most interesting book on Washington, Lincoln, and Wilson as War Statesmen. The discovery of this record throws a new light on Washington's military wisdom. Its absence furnishes a new explanation of more than a century of unpreparedness. If our fathers had followed the scientific plan so carefully elaborated by Washington with the aid of Baron von Steuben and his other generals, we should have been better prepared in the beginning for the War of 1812, the Civil War, and the World War.

So much for the book as history. But to me it suggests valuable practical lessons for the present and for the future. Washington was consciously seeking to solve the problem of economical military institutions for his country. That is still a vital problem and Washington's solution of it might well engage the thoughtful consideration of the modern statesman.

JOHN J. PERSHING.

PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

ENTER WASHINGTON

IT WAS my original purpose to write a book on Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson as War Presidents. By developing certain contrasts between the Civil War and the World War, I hoped to throw a new light on the real nature of the problems that confronted these two great statesmen under the supreme stress of war.

It had long been apparent to me that our historians have failed to give a satisfactory account of the evolution of our military institutions and the influence of that evolution upon our military history. On the one hand, civilian writers have generally ignored or slighted this essential phase of their subject; while, on the other hand, professional military writers have been too prone to consult history as a support for service propaganda.

It was therefore my purpose to interpret Abraham Lincoln's war burden in the light of our military institutions as they existed in 1861; to trace the development of those institutions as reformed by Elihu Root in the interval between our two great wars; and finally to interpret our participation in the World War from the standpoint of the more highly developed resources at the disposal of Woodrow Wilson. My own understanding of the characteristic features of the Civil War and the World War had been clarified by this comparative method of study. I therefore hoped that I might be able to make it the subject of a useful and interesting book.

My impressions of the state of our military institutions at the outbreak of the Civil War had been largely based upon General Emory Upton's *Military Policy of the United States*. That distinguished soldier had traced them from the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and had drawn his con-

clusions largely from the *Writings of Washington* as published by Jared Sparks. But as certain features of the Uptonian record did not appear quite clear to me, I determined to seek further light in the unpublished *Washington Papers* in the Library of Congress. Through the guidance of Mr. John C. Fitzpatrick, Acting Director of the Manuscripts Division, I was finally led to Volumes 219 and 220 of *The Washington Papers*, containing the General's military correspondence for the months of April and May, 1783. There I found the opening chapter of a remarkable story that throws a new light upon all of our subsequent history.

I found that just before disbanding the Continental Army, General Washington, after deliberate consultation with all of the other generals at or near his headquarters, had prepared a complete plan for the future defence of the newborn republic. I found that this plan, after further elaboration by Baron Steuben and General Knox, became the basis of President Washington's most cherished administration measure. I found that this highly constructive measure became involved in the political struggle between the followers of Hamilton and Jefferson; that it was therefore emasculated by legislative amendment and finally passed as the notorious Militia Act of 1792. And finally I found that General Upton in his researches had the misfortune not to find any of Washington's constructive proposals. Lacking this essential key to Washington's published writings, he was therefore inevitably led to misconstrue Washington's counsel to his countrymen and to misinterpret our military history from the beginning of the Revolution to the end of the Civil War.

This discovery completely changes the scope of my book. It places Washington in the same dramatic story with Lincoln and Wilson. At the beginning of our national history, Washington had carefully and consciously prepared a legacy of wisdom and foresight for the guidance of his remotest successors. It was because this legacy was not transmitted to them that Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson were doomed to bear the grievous burden of unprepared warfare. At the very beginning, Washington had proposed an Amer-

ican military system which contained in it all of the desirable features of the system we have finally attained after more than a century of spasmodic, painful, and costly evolution. Every important feature of our new organization since the World War was contained in its simplest and most economical form in the military policy which Washington first formulated at his headquarters in Newburg during the month of April, 1783.

The argument thus modified will be simpler to unfold and easier to read. It becomes a plain story instead of a disquisition. It is no longer a question of tracing the growth of a complex system of institutions from a conjectural beginning to a conjectural end. Washington, fresh from the experience of the Revolutionary War, consults his trusted generals as to how the new-born nation should assure peace and security by reasonable military safeguards suited to the genius of republican institutions. Then, in complete agreement with all of his advisers, he transmits the answer to the Continental Congress. As we read his plan as it developed, we see that he proposed adequate preparedness at the very beginning, not only for the War of 1812 but for the Civil War and the World War. We shall then discover how this simple chart was lost, and how without it to guide them two of his greatest successors were doomed to steer an uncharted course through stormy seas.

PART I

WASHINGTON'S LEGACY

CHAPTER I

AT WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS

I

CORNWALLIS surrendered at Yorktown on the 19th of October, 1781. But it was not until April 19, 1783, that the "Cessation of Hostilities" was announced to the Continental Army. Six days before that happy event, the following letter[1] was received by General Washington at his headquarters at Newburg:

Philadelphia,
April 9, 1783.

SIR:

Congress having appointed a committee consisting of Messrs. Madison, Osgood, Wilson, Elsworth and myself to consider what arrangements it will be proper to make in the different departments with reference to a peace, I am directed by the Committee to address your Excellency on the subject of the military department.

The Committee wish your Excellency's sentiments at large on such institutions of every kind for the interior defence of these States as may be best adapted to their circumstances and conciliate security with œconomy and with the principles of our governments. In this they will be glad if you will take as great latitude as you may think necessary, and will therefore omit entering into any details.

The Committee apprehend it to be the intention of Congress to lay down a general plan to be carried into execution as circumstances will permit, and that in attending to such dispositions as the immediate situation of the country may

[1]From Vol. 219, *The Washington Papers*, Library of Congress.

require they are chiefly desirous of establishing good principles that will have a permanent salutary operation.

I have the honor to be
Yr. Excellency's
Most Obedient Servant
ALX. HAMILTON
Chairman.

His Excellency
General Washington.

The foregoing letter is a remarkable example of the intelligent foresight of the founders of our Government. The cessation of hostilities presented a number of pressing problems. Among them was the demobilization of the Continental Army and the provision of garrisons for the frontier posts soon to be surrendered by Great Britain. It is characteristic of the sound statesmanship of Hamilton, Madison, and the other members of the committee, that in seeking "such dispositions as the immediate situation of the country may require," they were "chiefly desirous of establishing good principles that will have a permanent salutary operation." It will also be noted that in submitting this problem to its military experts, the civil authority was not unmindful of the supreme political considerations that must dominate all sound military organization. They therefore called for such institutions as would be best adapted to the "circumstances" of the States and which would "conciliate security with œconomy and with the principles of our governments." Here we find a remarkable statement of the problem of military institutions for the modern democratic state formulated six years before George Washington was inaugurated President of the United States.

2

Upon the receipt of this interesting letter, the commander-in-chief at once conformed to the procedure of all well-regulated military families. He referred the subject thus submitted to him to his principal military subordinates who were then serving at or near his headquarters. The following

note[1] was accordingly sent to his Chief of Artillery, General Henry Knox:

Headquarters 14 April 1783.

DEAR SIR:

The inclosed is copy of a letter which I have received by yesterday's post.

I have to request the favor of your sentiments on the subject mentioned and that you will give them to me as soon and as full as possible.

You will please also to communicate the letter to Gen. Huntington, & obtain his thoughts, which you will be so good as to forward with your own.

I am
D Sir
Your most obedient
Humble Servant
G. WASHINGTON.

To Gen. Knox.

Washington's letter to his Inspector General, Major General Baron von Steuben, is as follows:

Headquarters, April 14, 1783.

MY DEAR BARON:

A Committee of Congress is appointed to consider what arrangements it will be proper to adopt in the different departments with reference to a peace.

Col. Hamilton who is Chairman of this Committee has written me on this subject wishing to know my sentiments at large on such institutions of every kind for the interior defense of these States, as may be best adapted to their circumstances and conciliate security with œconomy and with the principles of our Governments.

I wish therefore to be favored with your thoughts on this Subject as soon as possible that I may compare them with my own

[1]From the rough retained copy in Vol. 219, *The Washington Papers*, Library of Congress.

and be able to comply with the request of the Committee in as full a manner and with as little delay as can be.

I am
My dear Baron,
Your very Obt.
G. W.

Baron Steuben.[1]

Washington also called upon Governor Clinton, General Pickering, General Heath, General Hand, and General Rufus Putnam for their "Sentiments" upon a peace establishment for the new republic. If he did not call upon all of his generals it was because time did not permit. General Greene, for example, was then in the Carolinas. As it frequently took two months or more to exchange letters with him, it was impracticable to profit by his advice.

Having thus taken the usual preliminary steps in so important a matter, Washington replied to the chairman of the Congressional Committee as follows:

Headquarters 16th April 1783.

SIR:

I have received your letter of the 9th instant in behalf of a Committee of Congress requesting my sentiments upon the military department of a peace establishment.

As this discussion will involve a variety of considerations, & those of very great importance, the Committee will indulge me in a little time to collect (*sic*) my ideas on this subject

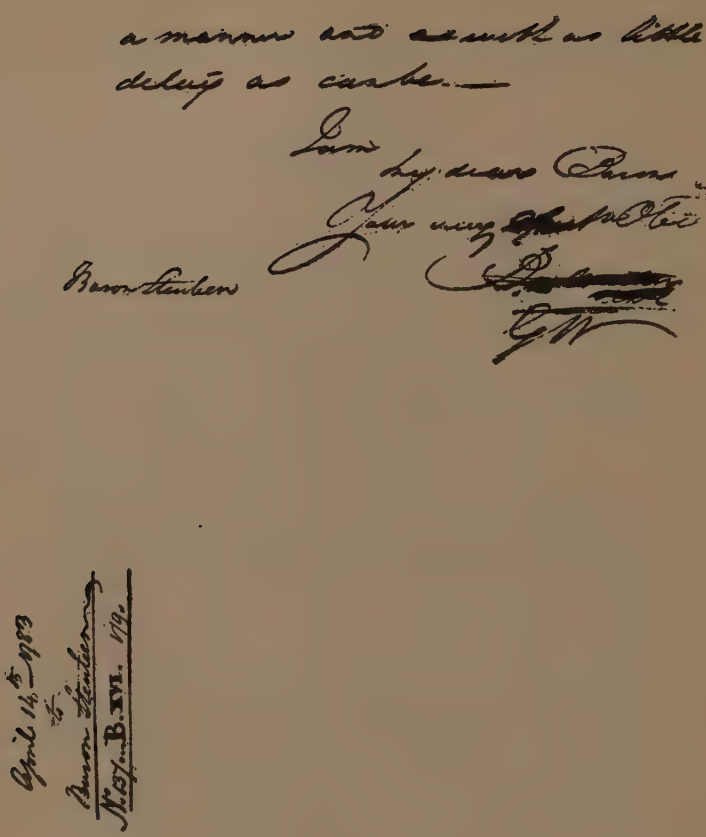
[1]From the retained rough draft in Vol. 219, *The Washington Papers*, Library of Congress. This draft was originally written by Colonel Benjamin Walker, Washington's Aide-de-Camp. The indicated revisions (see the accompanying facsimile copy) were made by Washington himself in order to change the letter from a formal communication into a familiar personal note.

This letter was included by Sparks in his *Writings of Washington* at page 417, Vol. VIII. In a footnote at the bottom of the same page Sparks explains that he is omitting similar letters to other officers. He also states that replies were received from these officers and that after digesting them, Washington prepared and transmitted his own "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment." It is most unfortunate that General Upton should have overlooked this footnote while he was preparing his *Military Policy of the United States*. It would have led him to the record of Washington's carefully digested views on the same subject.

New York April 18 1783

My dear Sir

A Committee of Congress is
appointed to consider what arrangements
it will be proper to adopt in the different
departments with respect to our
Coll. Hamilton who is Chairman
of this Committee has written to me
on this subject
and wishing to know
my sentiments at large on such
institutions of every kind for the
interior defence of these States, as
may be best adapted to their circum-
stances and conciliate security
with Economy and with the Principles
of our Government:
to correspond with
I wish you
to
your thoughts on this
subject as soon as possible that
I may compare them with mine
and be able to comply with the
request of the Committee as far
as



WASHINGTON'S LETTER TO BARON STEUBEN

This facsimile letter is of special interest because it gives a glimpse of the Headquarters routine and also reveals Washington's peculiarly intimate relations with Baron Steuben. The original draft was written by Washington's aide-de-camp, Benjamin Walker, for his own signature. When it was submitted to him for approval, Washington made the indicated revisions with his own pen. He struck out Walker's proposed subscription and substituted his own after converting the document from a formal order into a friendly personal letter. Colonel Walker was an intimate friend of Steuben's and had served on his personal staff for nearly four years before he became aide-de-camp to Washington. Baron Steuben's reply will be found on page 17.

—and they may depend on my communicating them in the best manner I am able & at the earliest period in my power.

I am, etc.

Col. Hamilton in Congress.[1]

3

The replies of the officers consulted by General Washington are contained in Volume 219, *The Washington Papers*, Library of Congress. The most striking thing about them is their remarkable unanimity in regard to the military needs of the United States. This is probably due to the fact that the subject was one that had been discussed frequently at Washington's headquarters. With two exceptions,[2] they all agreed that the militia should be given a definite and uniform organization throughout the States. They agreed that a well-regulated militia, so formed, would be the sufficient and adequate basis for an effective national defence. They also united in the opinion that, while neither necessary nor desirable for purposes of national defence, there should be a small regular army. This regular force would serve as a constabulary for the Indian frontier and for other special duties that cannot be performed by citizen soldiers in time of peace. It is quite evident, from a consideration of these papers, that if there had been no Indian problem our fathers would have found no need for a standing army.

This general opinion as to the primary importance of a well-regulated militia and the purely secondary importance of the proposed regular forces is stated most concisely by General Pickering. In his letter to the Commander-in-Chief, dated April 22, 1783, he says:

[1]From the rough retained copy in Vol. 219, *The Washington Papers*, Library of Congress. An illegible word is marked (*sic*).

[2]The two exceptions were General Huntington and Governor Clinton. Huntington devoted himself principally to the needs of the frontier posts. Clinton, as Governor of New York, had not been in close contact with the officers at headquarters. He made no contribution to the solution of the militia problem but did recommend military instruction in colleges. Here he seems to have anticipated our modern R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officers' Training Corps.)

. . . We must have recourse for our general defence by land, to the only palladium[1] of a free people—a well-regulated and disciplined militia. I say for our general defence, because some permanent establishments, for the protection of our frontiers and the security of our magazines will be necessary independent of the militia.

4

General Pickering and the other general officers consulted, with one exception, were all Americans and citizen soldiers. It is not surprising, therefore, to find them tinctured with the characteristic Anglo-Saxon heresy of reliance upon militia. We must therefore feel some curiosity as to how Baron von Steuben would reply to Washington.

For Steuben was one of the most accomplished professional soldiers of modern times. He had been an officer in the Prussian Army for twenty years. He had served with that army throughout the deadly conflicts of the Seven Years War. His military services had been so distinguished that Frederick the Great had singled him out as one of his personal aides-de-camp. He had been trained in general staff studies by the great king himself. He had devoted his whole life to the close scientific study of military institutions and organization. Nor was he ignorant of American affairs. For five years he had served on Washington's staff as Inspector General of the Continental Army. Since Valley Forge he had repeatedly inspected all of the units of that force. He was therefore in an unique position to appraise every virtue and every weakness of the American citizen soldier.

One week after receiving Washington's letter, Baron Steuben submitted his thoughts on a peace establishment with the following letter of transmittal:

SIR:

I have the honor to present Your Excellency with my thoughts on a peace Establishment for our interior defence; how far

[1]Washington was so pleased with the aptness of this word that he paid Pickering the compliment of taking it into his own vocabulary. In the following June, in a circular letter to the Governors of all the States, he said: "The militia of this country must be considered as the *palladium* of our security, and the first effectual resort in case of hostility."

Sir,

I have the honor to present Your Excellency with my thoughts on a peace establishment for our national defence. How far my plan is adapted to the circumstances of the United States & whether it will agree with the principles of your government, I am not able to determine.

This I am certain of, that we have need of a regular force for the protection of our frontiers. That our Militia ought to be on a regular footing & that the establishment of military schools & manufactories will be the best means of providing for our security in future and that a system of this nature will make us more respectable with the powers of Europe than if we should keep up an army of fifty thousand men. with the greatest respect. I have the honor to be

Sir, Your Excellencys
Most Obedt Servt
Steuben
Maj: Genl & Insp.

April 21 1783

BARON STEUBEN'S REPLY TO WASHINGTON

my plan is adapted to the circumstances of the United States and whether it will agree with the principles of our governments I am not able to determine.

This I am Certain of, that we have need of a regular force for the protection of our frontiers, that our Militia ought to be on a regular footing, and that the Establishment of military schools & manufactories will be the best means of providing for our security in future and that *a System of this nature will make us more respectable with the powers of Europe than if we keep up an Army of fifty thousand men.*[1] With the greatest respect

I have the honor to be,
Sir, Your Excellencies
Most obedient servant
STEUBEN
Maj. General.

April 21, 1783.

In the body of his report, Baron Steuben includes a statement of the proper military policy for the new republic, even more complete and concise than that which we have quoted from General Pickering. In this connection the Baron says:

> A chain of small posts along the frontier as much for the protection of trade as to be a check for the Indians, a well-organized militia, and the establishment of military schools and manufactories is all that will be necessary for our Security.

It will also be interesting to note that Steuben estimated 2601 enlisted men as sufficient to garrison the "small posts along the frontier." This estimate was based upon a careful survey of the whole situation on the border from the Penobscot to the Straits of Mackinac. The Baron had given this subject his special consideration because he had recently been detailed by General Washington to take over the frontier posts from General Haldiman, the British Commander in Canada.

[1]The italics are mine.

CHAPTER II

"SENTIMENTS ON A PEACE ESTABLISHMENT"

I

WASHINGTON received Steuben's letter and the accompanying memoir on April 21st. On the 1st of May he forwarded his own "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment." In my first search, I was unable to find the retained copy of this document in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. It was not in its proper chronological place in Volume 220 of *The Washington Papers*. Later I found that the original was listed in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*. But though listed as in the file, Washington's "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" was missing. When I reported this fact to Mr. Fitzpatrick, the Acting Director, after a moment's reflection he said: "There is still one chance. Let us examine Washington's 'Barrack Book' for May, 1783." And there we found it. The "Barrack Book" proved to be what was called a "Letters Sent Book" in the old army before the days of the typewriter and the carbon copy. All of our older officers will remember the big leather-bound folio in which a headquarters clerk recorded briefs of all outgoing documents, with full copies of the more important papers. Such a folio volume was Washington's "Barrack Book" for the month of May, 1783. And there we found his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment,"[1] copied in extenso in the fair hand of a headquarters clerk.

What a glimpse of that old headquarters this gives us! We can almost see that headquarters clerk of long ago with his carefully kept quill pen, his portable ink bottle, his blotting sand, and his artistic temperament. And evidently the

[1] A copy of this document is given in full in Appendix I.

Father of Our Country had been guilty of the characteristic crime of all commanding officers. He had robbed some poor subordinate of his favorite clerk. Out among the regiments of the Continental Army there was one indignant commanding officer who was cursing himself because he had permitted "Private Jenkins" to display the fullness of his art on some official document. The Colonel had forwarded that document with commendable pride, but, alas, it was the pride that goeth before a fall.

2

On the first page of his treatise, Washington summarizes his subject as follows:

> A Peace Establishment for the United States of America may in my opinion be classed under four different heads, viz:
>
> *First.* A regular and standing force, for Garrisoning West Point & such other posts upon our Northern, Western, and Southern Frontiers, as shall be deemed necessary to awe the Indians, protect our Trade, prevent the encroachment of our neighbors of Canada and the Floridas and guard us at least from Surprizes; Also for security of our Magazines.
>
> *Secondly.* A well organized Militia; upon a Plan that will pervade all the States, and introduce similarity in their Establishment, Manœuvres, Exercise and Arms.
>
> *Thirdly.* Establishing Arsenals of all kinds of Military Stores.
>
> *Fourthly.* Academies, one or more for the Instruction of the Art Military; particularly those Branches of it which respect Engineering and Artillery, which are highly essential, and the knowledge of which is most difficult to obtain. Also Manufactories of some kinds of Military Stores.
>
> Upon each of these in the order in which they stand, I shall give my sentiments as concisely as I can, and with that freedom which the Committee have authorized.

In connection with his first heading, Washington says:

Altho' a *large*[1] standing Army in time of Peace hath ever been considered dangerous to the liberties of a Country, yet a few Troops, under certain circumstances, are not only safe, but indispensably necessary. Fortunately for us our relative situation requires but few. The same circumstances which so effectually retarded, and in the end conspired to defeat the Attempts of Britain to subdue us, will now powerfully tend to render us secure. Our *distance*[1] from the European States in a great degree frees us of apprehension, from their numerous regular forces and the Insults and dangers which are to be dreaded from their Ambition.

But if our danger from these powers was more imminent, yet are we too poor to maintain a standing army adequate to our defence, and was our country more populous and more rich, still it could not be done without great oppression of the people. Besides, as soon as we are able to raise funds more than adequate to the discharge of the Debts incurred by the Revolution, it may become a question worthy of consideration, whether the surplus should not be applied in preparations for building and equipping a Navy, without which, in case of War we could neither protect our commerce nor yield that assistance to each other, which, on such an extent of sea-coast,[2] our mutual safety would require.

In the foregoing paragraph Washington defines the true mission of the Navy. Under his plan, it is essential to the defence of our over-seas commerce and over-seas communications, but is not essential to the defence of the Continental United States. With a "well-organized militia" established as "the palladium of our security and the first effectual resort in case of hostility," the Navy would be free to concentrate upon its legitimate sea mission without any concern for the Continental defence.

3

After an exhaustive survey of the Indian frontier from the Penobscot to the remote Far West, then known as the "Illi-

[1]The italics are Washington's.

[2]This was, of course, true in Washington's day. To-day, with our interstate communication by railroad and highway, our land defence is no longer dependent upon coastwise communication by sea.

nois Country," Washington completed his proposed organization for the Regular Army. He recommended four small regiments of Infantry and one small regiment of Artillery. All of the Infantry, with gun detachments from the Artillery, was to occupy the posts on the Indian frontier. The total strength of this force was to be 2683[1] officers and men. It is quite evident that the Infantry of this establishment was intended solely as a Constabulary for the Indian country. Had there been no Indian problem there would have been no place for a standing army in Washington's "Military Policy of the United States." He relied upon citizen soldiers for defence, but he found that some professional soldiers were indispensable. He therefore proposed enough professionals to do those things that manifestly cannot be done by citizen soldiers in time of peace. He wanted *enough* professional soldiers for these special services but *no more*. It is highly significant that Steuben, the trained professional soldier, should agree with Washington in this.

Having disposed of the regular establishment, Washington then proceeded to the main feature of his military policy, that is, the establishment of a well-regulated militia. In introducing this subject, he says:

> I come next in the order I have prescribed myself, to treat of the Arrangements necessary for placing the Militia of the Continent on a respectable footing for the defence of the Empire and in speaking of this Great Bulwark of our Liberties and independence, I shall claim the indulgence of suggesting whatever general observations may occur from experience and reflection with the greater freedom, from a conviction of the importance of the subject; *being persuaded that the immediate safety and future tranquility of this extensive Continent depend in a great measure upon the peace Establishment now in contemplation*;[2] and being convinced at the same time, that the only

[1]Washington's proposed organization and distribution of this force are given in full in Appendix I. This total, 2683, includes 2 general officers and 50 artificers which were recommended by Washington but were not included in his tables of organization. Appendix I also gives a most interesting description of conditions in the Western country as it existed in Washington's day. See map following page 386.

[2]The italics are mine.

probable means of preventing insult or hostility for any length of time and from being exempted from the consequent calamities of War, is to put the National Militia in such a condition as that they may appear truly respectable in the Eyes of our Friends and formidable to those who would otherwise become our Enemies.

Were it not totally unnecessary and superfluous to adduce arguments to prove what is considered on all hands the Policy and expediency of resting the protection of the Country on a respectable and well established Militia, we might not only shew the propriety of the measure from our peculiar local situation, but we might have recourse to the Histories of Greece and Rome in their most virtuous and Patriotic ages to demonstrate the utility of such Establishments. Then passing by the Mercenary Armies, which have at one time or another subverted the liberties of allmost all the Countries they have been raised to defend, we might see, with admiration, the Freedom and Independence of Switzerland[1] supported for Centuries, in the midst of powerful and jealous neighbors, by means of a hardy and well organized Militia. We might also derive useful lessons of a similar kind from other Nations of Europe, but I believe it will be found, the *People of this Continent*[2] are too well acquainted with the Merits of the subject to require information or example.

4

Washington then refers to the existing organization of the Colonial Militia in which all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and fifty were enrolled. This organization he concedes to be sound on the theory that all men are under an obligation to defend their country. He then adds:

. . . but as it is obvious among such a Multitude of People (who may indeed be useful for temporary service) there must be a great number who from domestic Circumstances, bodily defects, natural awkwardness or disinclination, can never

[1]As we shall see later, Washington, under the scientific guidance of Baron Steuben, had made a thorough study of the military systems of Europe. After he became President, he approved an elaborate American adaptation of the Swiss System, based upon studies by Steuben and Knox, and transmitted it to the First Congress.

[2]The italics are Washington's.

acquire the habits of Soldiers; but on the contrary will injure the appearance of any body of Troops to which they are attached, and as there are a sufficient proportion of able bodied young Men, between the Age of 18 and 25, who from a natural fondness for Military parade (which passion is almost ever prevalent at that period of life) might easily be enlisted or drafted to form a Corps in every State, capable of resisting any sudden impression which might be attempted by a foreign Enemy, while the remainder of the National Forces would have time to assemble and make preparations for the Field. I would wish therefore, that the former,[1] being considered as a *dernier resort*[2], reserved for some great occasion, a judicious system might be adopted for forming and placing the latter[3] on the best possible Establishment, *and that while the men of this description shall be viewed as the Van and flower of the American Forces, ever ready for Action and zealous to be employed whenever it may become necessary in the service of their Country; they should meet with such exemptions, privileges or distinctions, as might tend to keep alive a true Military pride, a nice sense of honour, and a patriotic regard for the public.*[4]

5

In the foregoing passage Washington penetrated into the very heart of the militia problem. The obvious, common-sense solution was to separate the younger and more active men from their elders and to give them effective organization and training in time of peace. In 1783, the enrolled militia of the Colonies numbered more than 400,000 men. It would be impracticable to arm and train this mighty host and there could be no use for such vast numbers even if trained. On the other hand there were about 138,000 able-bodied young Americans under the age of twenty-five.

It is obvious from these figures that Washington was fully justified in his belief that the security of the country could be left to a limited number of its patriotic young men. This is what Baron Steuben had in mind when he said that

[1]That is, the whole militia.

[2]The italics are Washington's.

[3]That is, a portion of the younger men.

[4]The italics are mine.

a well-organized militia would "make us more respectable with the nations of Europe than if we keep up an army of fifty thousand men."

There were more than enough able-bodied, active youngsters to fill the Continental Army of the future. Washington therefore proposed that a sufficient number of them should be formed and trained as an organized first line in time of peace. *This is what Washington meant by a "well-regulated militia."* In omitting this, Sparks omitted the key to all of Washington's military writings—and this essential key, General Upton did not find.

6

It will be convenient at this point to call attention to an apparent paradox in Washington's views on the militia. No man ever knew this institution more thoroughly than he. No man ever condemned it more vigorously and no man ever commended it more highly. His published writings are full of his denunciation of the militia during the Revolutionary War. This is so well known that a few quotations will suffice to summarize his point of view.

In a letter to the President of Congress written in September, 1776, shortly after his disastrous defeat in the Battle of Long Island, we find the following significant passage:

> To place any dependence upon militia is assuredly resting upon a broken staff.

In the same letter he also says:

> For if I was called upon to declare upon oath whether the militia had been most serviceable or hurtful, upon the whole I should subscribe to the latter. I do not mean by this, however, to arraign the conduct of Congress; in so doing I should equally condemn my own measures, if I did not my judgment, but experience which is the best criterion to work by, so fully, clearly, and decisively reprobates the practice of trusting to militia, that no man who regards order, regularity and economy, or who has any regard for his own honor, character or peace of mind, will risk them upon this issue.

In December of the same year after his retreat through New Jersey and a few days before the Battle of Trenton he again addresses the President of Congress. In this letter he says:

> Short enlistments and a mistaken dependence upon militia, have been the origin of all our misfortunes and the great accumulation of our debt.

This letter also contains his famous characterization of the militia who, to use his words:

> Come in you cannot tell how, go you cannot tell when, and act you cannot tell where, consume your provisions, exhaust your stores, and leave you at last at a critical moment.

But after the conclusion of the war, even Washington's published writings apparently indicate a complete reversal of opinion. In June, 1783, in a circular letter to the Governors of all the States he makes the following declaration:

> The militia of this country must be considered as the palladium of our security, and the first effectual resort in case of hostility. It is essential therefore, that the same system should pervade the whole: that the formation and discipline of the militia of the continent should be absolutely uniform.

After he became President, in his first and in every subsequent annual message to Congress he urged the establishment of a "well-regulated militia" as the necessary and sufficient basis of national defence. In January, 1790, he transmitted an elaborate plan of militia organization to Congress as an important administration measure—equally important, in his estimation, with the financial system prepared for him by Alexander Hamilton. How are we to explain that in 1783, and thereafter, he proposed to make a "palladium of security" out of the "broken staff" of 1776? How are we to explain this apparent paradox?

The answer is to be found in considering Washington's writings as a whole. His unpublished writings, and particu-

larly his "Sentiments" of 1783, form the connecting link. If Sparks had published that document there could have been no apparent inconsistency in the record. The story taken as a whole is very simple. The general body of the militia as it existed during the Revolution was designed solely for local defence and was entirely unsuited for prolonged military operations. This local militia demonstrated on many occasions that it could resist hostile forays such as the British attempted at Lexington and Concord. In this it served its purpose by confining the British to operations in large bodies. This made an effective military occupation of any extensive area impossible. But detachments of Massachusetts militia-men, as such, could not follow the British army from Boston to Philadelphia and from Saratoga to Yorktown. For this purpose it was necessary to embody a relatively small fraction of the militia into a more permanent body known as the Continental Army.

On account of an administrative error made at the beginning it was impossible to maintain the Continental Army at proper strength. For this reason it was necessary to reënforce it from time to time by drafts from the local militia. As the local force was not intended or organized for this purpose its services in this capacity were of course unsatisfactory. When Washington denounced the militia he simply emphasized the perfectly obvious fact that neighborhood organizations designed for local defence were unsuited for prolonged and systematic operations. When he expressed a preference for regular troops he referred to the Continental Army, which was a special fraction of the militia like our present National Guard. It was not in any sense what we have in mind when we refer to the regular army to-day.

Indeed, Washington's views on this interesting subject have been so grossly misrepresented by propagandists that it will be necessary to reëxamine his experience in the Revolutionary War before it will be profitable to make any further study of the National Defence Plan which he submitted to the Continental Congress in 1783.

CHAPTER III

THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION

1

During the month of October, 1774, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts took steps to put the Colony in a state of defence. It directed that all able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and fifty should be formed into companies and regiments. It provided for the appointment of company and regimental officers. It prescribed that the men should be drilled at stated times and that one fourth of the militia in each community should be told off as minute-men to be constantly on the alert and ready for any sudden emergency.

In establishing this military organization, the Provincial Congress did not create any new military institutions. This form of territorial militia had been the characteristic military institution of the English people since the beginning of their history. It had been established in a similar way in America during the several Colonial wars. Its last active embodiment had been during the French and Indian War which ended in 1763. In the eleven years' interval of peace, it had been permitted to decline in systematic vigor but its principles were well understood. Indeed, in 1774, many of the officers of the militia were veterans of the earlier struggle in which the British Empire had won Canada from the French. There was therefore no innovation in the measures[1] adopted by the Provincial Congress. It had only to set in motion the existing machinery of an ancient institution.

2

It will aid to an understanding of the provincial military system at the outbreak of the Revolution to consider its

[1]Similar measures were adopted in the other Colonies.

operation in a single community. In the town of Rexford[1] there were one thousand men, women, and children. Among these were 245 men between the ages of sixteen and fifty. But not all males of military age are fit and available for military duty. Some must be excused on account of physical disability and some because their continuous services are essential to the life of the community. There were sixty such exempts in the town of Rexford. This left a remainder of 185 fit and available fighting men. Of these, 106 were under the age of thirty-two; 49 were between the ages of thirty-two and forty; and 30 were between the ages of forty and fifty.

Such was the situation in the town of Rexford between the late summer of 1774 and the spring of 1775. At least once a week, its militia companies were drilled in the training field. Their officers were the natural leaders of the community and many of them were veterans of the late war. In many respects the training of these citizen soldiers was defective but the normal life of the Colonial farmer and villager had developed many of the most essential military qualities. Most of them were men of the open air, accustomed to hardship and to frugal living. Most of them also were hunters and therefore good marksmen within the short ranges of the weapons of that day. In short, the town of Rexford had become a military cantonment in which one hundred and eighty-five citizen soldiers were billeted in their own homes. Among these were forty-six minute-men selected from the most vigorous and the most available. These were constantly on the alert.

Such was the organization of the township on the 19th of April, 1775. Just before dawn, a mounted courier brought the news that a column of British Regulars was marching out on the Lexington Road, presumably to seize the military stores at Concord. A little later an unaccustomed reveille of musketry fire was heard in the direction of Lexington. We can imagine the hurried awakening of the settlement.

[1]Rexford is an imaginary town. It is necessary to consider the distribution of military population according to age, in order to understand certain economic and social aspects of the military problem in the Colonies. I have therefore taken an imaginary community with a population of exactly 1000 souls in order to simplify this discussion.

Within a little while, the minute-men mustered and marched away to their rendezvous, while the remaining hundred and thirty-nine men of the general militia made ready to defend the village if the red-coats should dare to come that way. And during the morning rumors came thick and fast. Soon there was news that a number of minute-men had been killed in the skirmish at Lexington Common. Later came word that the red-coats had passed through Lexington and were marching out on the Concord Road.

Rexford was too distant to hear the firing at Concord, but all eyes were turned in that direction. Early in the afternoon, the villagers beheld an ancient and portentous military signal. A great cloud of smoke was rising from the horizon over Concord way. Even then, some of the more restless of the home-guards slipped away with their rifles to join the minute-men at the front.

Later came word that the red-coats were retreating. Still later came the rattle of distant musketry. Then came news that the militia were manning the hills and woods along the highway and were firing at the foe who were retreating on Boston and not halting by the way. This was a new situation for our village garrison. "As Rexford is not on the hostile line of march, why stay here? Why not scurry down to the Boston Road and see the red-coats? Perhaps we can salute them with a shot or two." So from far and wide the village garrisons move, the greater body of local militiamen joining the minute-men. From north and south the angry settlers approach the fatal road. Tired regulars in red coats with yellow facings,[1] in three-cornered cocked hats trimmed in lace, with huge white cravats and long white gaiters, make a brilliant target for invisible countrymen as they fire from every wood and thicket. And what can the bravest red-coats do? If they charge this wood the foe is gone. He fires again from another coppice as invisible as ever. And so the hunt goes on till the bedraggled quarry reaches safety at Charlestown. In their march through this hornets' nest a column of British regular infantry had lost 273 killed and wounded men.

[1]The uniform described here was that of one of the English regiments, the 10th Foot.

The Colonial militia proved itself that day. And the British learned a lesson they never forgot to the end of the war. From that day their strategy was restricted. The potential fighting power of the Colonial militia tied the effective English occupation to the seaports. They could not move into the country except in force or in sudden forays along the coast. It might be some time before these rebels could expel foreign soldiers from their shores. But from that April morning wise men, both at home and in England, knew that the American colonists could not be subjugated.

3

We can imagine that almost all of our Rexford militia took part in that pursuit from Lexington. Most of them must have joined in the gathering host that now invested Boston. Many of them were ready to remain there a day or two or perhaps a week. But in a short time most of them must drift back home. The women and children and the grandfathers might do the chores for a day or two. But no township can live long with all of its able-bodied men away. The fields must be plowed and crops put in. Wood must be cut and hauled and meal must be ground. Even in war-time men must be clothed and fed. Indeed if some must fight the others must work all the harder. The new military situation demanded a new military organization. The militia had hemmed the British into Boston but now Boston must be besieged. This would be an affair of months and would require an army. To this new enterprise Rexford must contribute her share but obviously much less than all of her able-bodied men.

If the First Provincial Congress of Massachusetts had legislated wisely in October, 1774, its successor, the Second Provincial Congress, met the new situation as promptly and with equal wisdom. Three days after the Battle of Concord, it took steps to form a New England army for the siege of Boston and the general defence. This new force was fixed at 30,000 men. Of this number, Massachusetts offered to furnish 13,600 and requested New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut to furnish the remainder. As the population

of Massachusetts was 335,000 in 1775, this called for 406 soldiers from each ten thousand souls.

If this quota of 406 men for each 10,000 of population had been adopted for all of the Colonies it would have produced a National or Continental Army of 48,000 men with more than 173,000 able-bodied men retained at their homes as an organized militia for local defence. These figures are conservative. The total white population in 1775 was 2,065,000, but for purposes of this calculation, the available population is taken as only 1,200,000. The difference, 865,000, is taken as that portion of the white population with loyalist sympathies and that portion which lived in isolated frontier settlements. If such an army had been formed and maintained from the beginning the war might have ended in 1776 and must have ended before the winter of 1777.

4

But could the Colonies have maintained such a force? We can answer this question best by considering its effect upon the economic and social life of a single community. Rexford's quota in the new army would be forty-one men, or less than the number of minute-men in the existing local organization. We have no records upon which to determine the actual distribution of military population in Massachusetts, in 1775. But by reference to Swiss statistics we have the benefit of actual experience in democratic military organization. In a modern Swiss community of one thousand souls, there would be forty combatant soldiers between the ages of twenty and thirty-two; twenty-seven combatant soldiers between the ages of thirty-two and forty; and thirteen combatant soldiers between the ages of forty and forty-eight; or eighty combatant soldiers in all between the ages of twenty and forty-eight. In addition to these strictly fighting men there would be seventy-five non-combatant soldiers within the same age limits available as teamsters, service corps men, and for other auxiliary services. These numbers would be still greater in Rexford because, under the Massachusetts law of 1774, militia service extended from the age

of sixteen to the age of fifty. Making due allowance for this difference Rexford should have 185 men fit for military service. Of these ninety-seven should be fit and available for combatant duty and eighty-eight fit and available for auxiliary service. But as fewer men were required for the auxiliary services a century and a half ago, we may safely say that Rexford should have at least one hundred and twenty men fit for active service in the New England Army.

With this showing, there can be no doubt of Rexford's capacity to furnish her quota of forty-one men to the army besieging Boston. Indeed, if necessary, she could furnish her full quota without enlisting a single man over thirty. And she could maintain such a force indefinitely because each year ten or eleven new youngsters would reach their military age. To summarize the situation, Rexford could furnish and maintain her quota to the Boston army and still maintain one hundred and forty-four able-bodied men under the age of fifty for her industries and for local defence.

5

Due credit has not been given to the importance of the military legislation enacted in 1774 and 1775 by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. In October, 1774, its action in mobilizing the traditional Anglo-Saxon militia formulated what was in fact the real declaration of American Independence. In April, 1775, in forming the New England army for the siege of Boston it showed how war armies should be formed in the modern democratic state—that is by organizing a mobile fraction of the younger and more active men from the general body of the militia. The Continental Army, so formed, is thus seen to be not a regular or standing army in the modern sense, but the forerunner and prototype of our present National Guard. Indeed in its military organization, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress established the true model for the future military policy of the United States. Making proper allowances for differences in wealth and population, our military institutions were more effective in 1774 and 1775 than they were in 1861 or 1917. In 1774, our

fathers built upon the traditional military institutions of our race. In 1861, the North had forgotten those traditional institutions. The Confederacy almost won its independence because the North *did* have and the South *did not* have a standing army.[1] Before the World War, our General Staff not only forgot our traditional military policy, but sought to develop an alien organization which had been deliberately designed in imitation of the Prussian military system. Since the World War, we have made some progress in returning toward our ancient heritage. But we still have much to learn from the Massachusetts military statesmen of 1774 and 1775.

But though the general military policy adopted in 1774 and 1775 was a model of military wisdom, it was not carried into effect. This was not due, as is generally supposed, to any defect in the institutions themselves but to a purely administrative error. During the spring and summer of 1775, under the enthusiasm inspired by Concord and Bunker Hill, more men offered to enlist than were needed. These men were eager to serve and might then have been enlisted for the war. But the authorities made the mistake of making the enlistment contract only to the end of the current year. The result was that all terms of service expired in December and the men naturally claimed their contractual right to a discharge. It then became necessary to make new enlistments for the ensuing year. The men already in service were unwilling to reënlist. They had served long enough to find discipline irksome but not long enough to acquire the pride of disciplined soldiers. They felt, no doubt, that their brethren should now take their turn. But the original enthusiasm had subsided. Enlistment now meant the hardships of trench warfare in midwinter. Men who had been rejected as surplus six months before were no longer eager to serve.

If we consider the effect of this situation in a typical town like Rexford we will be able to appreciate its demoralizing effect throughout the country. We have seen that the town was quite able to furnish and maintain her proper army

[1]This was General Grant's opinion. See his *Memoirs*, I, 283.

quota. We may also assume that her fittest and most available young men were in the original contingent. If this allotment had been permanent, that is, for the war, she must have speedily adjusted her social and industrial organization to the duty of maintaining that contingent. The general body of militia in the village must then have become a permanent depot for its contingent in the field. There would have been a growing village pride in this permanent contribution to the Continental Army. But under the short enlistment contract this relation ended before it became effective and before the Army became a disciplined force. As the returning men had fulfilled their contract there could be no strong public opinion urging them to reënlist. With a sound enlistment contract in the beginning there should have been a strong automatic bond between the Continental Army and the general militia from which it was drawn. But with the initial short enlistment this bond was destroyed before it matured.

6

Unfortunately the enlistment policy adopted by the New England authorities in the spring of 1775 was also adopted by the General Government. The whole story is related concisely by John Marshall[1] as follows:

> On the 29th of September, a committee (*of Congress*) had been appointed with directions to repair to the camp at Cambridge, there to consult with the Commander-in-Chief, and with the Chief Magistrates of New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and the council of Massachusetts, "on the most effectual method of continuing, supporting and regulating a continental army." On the return of this committee, it was determined, that the new army intended to lie before Boston should consist of twenty thousand, three hundred and seventy-two[2] men, including officers, to be raised as far as practicable

[1]See Marshall's *Washington*, II, 262-264. Here Marshall should be recognized not only as a historian but as a first-hand witness on this subject. He served as a soldier throughout the war.

[2]This number relates to the strength of the New England or Boston Army alone. At this time Congress was also beginning to raise continental troops in the other colonies.

from the troops already in service at that place. Unfortunately, in constituting this first military establishment of the union, an essential, possibly an inevitable error was committed, the consequences of which were ever afterwards very severely felt. The enlistments, instead of being for the war, were only for the term of one year, if not sooner discharged by Congress. It is not easy entirely to account for this fatal error. Some jealousy of a permanent army was, probably, intermingled with the hope, that the war would not be of long duration, and with the fear that much difficulty would be experienced in prevailing on men to enter into engagements of unlimited extent. Perhaps the habits of the northern colonies, where it had been usual to raise men for a single campaign,[1] may have contributed to this measure. And it very probably might have been supposed that as hostilities progressed, the public resentments would increase, the people would be more united, and the ranks would be filled with more facility. Whatever motives led to its adoption, its consequences were of the most serious nature; and no one part of the American System brought their ultimate success into such real hazard.

The folly of enlisting men for a shorter period than the duration of the war was fully understood by Washington. A Mr. Partridge of Duxbury, one of a committee appointed to wait upon him, asked him whether enlistments for one year would not suffice. Washington exclaimed in reply: "Good God! gentlemen, our cause is ruined if you engage men for only a year. You must not think of it. If we hope for success we must have men enlisted for the whole term of the war."[2] In September, 1776, he wrote to the President of Congress:[3] "When the army was first raised at Cambridge, I am persuaded the men might have been got without bounty for the war."

All of the disasters of the Revolutionary War were due to

[1]The contingents furnished by Massachusetts and the other New England Colonies for the several French and Indian Wars had been engaged for a single campaign which in each case was presumed to terminate with the current year.

[2]See *Three Episodes of New England History*, by Charles Francis Adams, II, 873.

[3]Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, IV, 112.

this single error and to complications that flowed directly from it. The army organization was fundamentally sound. Every subsequent delay and disaster can be traced to the one error of making short enlistments at the beginning. This view is most eloquently expressed by Washington in a letter to the President of Congress dated August 20, 1780:[1]

> Had we formed a permanent army at the beginning, which by the continuance of the same men in service, had been capable of discipline, we never should have had to retreat with a handful of men across the Delaware in 1776, trembling for the fate of America, which nothing but the infatuation of the enemy could have saved; we should not have remained all the succeeding winter at their mercy, with sometimes scarcely a sufficient body of men to mount the ordinary guards, liable at every moment to be dissipated, if they had only thought proper to march against us; we should not have been under the necessity of fighting Brandywine, with an unequal number of raw troops, and afterwards of seeing Philadelphia fall a prey to a victorious army; we should not have been at Valley Forge with less than half the force of the enemy, destitute of everything, in a situation neither to resist nor to retire; we should not have seen New York left with a handful of men, yet an overmatch for the main army of these States, while the principal part of their force was detached for the reduction of two of them; we should not have found ourselves this spring so weak as to be insulted by 5000 men, unable to protect our baggage and magazines, their security depending on a good countenance and a want of enterprise in the enemy; we should not have been the greatest part of the war inferior to the enemy, indebted for our safety to their inactivity, enduring frequently the mortification of seeing inviting opportunity to ruin them pass unimproved for want of a force which the country was completely able to afford, and of seeing the country ravaged, our towns burnt, the inhabitants plundered, abused, murdered, with impunity from the same cause.
>
> Nor have the ill effects been confined to the military line. A great part of the embarrassments in the civil departments flow from the same source. The derangement of our finances is essentially to be ascribed to it. The expenses of the war and

[1] Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, VII, 162–164.

the paper emissions have been greatly multiplied by it. We have had a great part of the time two sets of men to feed and pay—the discharged men going home and the levies coming in. This was more remarkably the case in 1775 and 1776. The difficulty and cost of engaging men have increased at every successive attempt, till among the present lines we find there are some who have received $150 in specie for five months service, while our officers are reduced to the disagreeable necessity of performing the duties of drill sergeants to them, with this mortifying reflection annexed to the business, that by the time they have taught these men the rudiments of a soldier's duty their services will have expired and the work recommenced with a new set. The consumption of provisions, arms, accoutrements, and stores of every kind has been doubled in spite of every precaution I could use, not only from the cause just mentioned, but from the carelessness and licentiousness incident to militia and irregular troops. Our discipline also has been much hurt, if not ruined by such constant changes. The frequent calls upon the militia have interrupted the cultivation of the land, and of course have lessened the quantity of its produce, occasioned a scarcity and enhanced the prices. In an army so unstable as ours order and economy have been impracticable. No person who has been a close observer of the progress of our affairs can doubt that our currency has depreciated without comparison more rapidly from the system of short enlistments than it would have done otherwise.

There is every reason to believe that the war has been protracted on this account. Our opposition being less, the successes of the enemy have been greater. The fluctuation of the army kept alive their hopes, and at every period of the dissolution of a considerable part of it they have flattered themselves with some decisive advantages. Had we kept a permanent army on foot the enemy could have had nothing to hope for, and would in all probability have listened to terms long since.

Indeed it is inconceivable that the war could have lasted beyond the fall of 1777, if a sound recruiting policy had been adopted in 1775. The quotas allotted to New England in October of that year, if applied to the other Colonies in proportion to white population, should have produced a Con-

tinental Army of at least 45,000 men. Most of these troops could have been concentrated for active operations, as the general militia organization provided adequately for local defence. Under these conditions Washington should have been able to concentrate at least 30,000 veterans against Howe after Burgoyne's surrender.[1] With this force, he should have ended the war in decisive victory before the winter of Valley Forge.

7

But there is a futility in the development of air castles on the insecure foundation of historical *Ifs*. We may safely agree with Washington that a faulty recruiting policy prolonged the Revolutionary War. But the war with all its delays and all its sufferings was essential to making our nation what it is. If Washington had been given all the resources that he sought, we never could have known the mighty resources of his unconquerable intellect and soul. It was this actual Washington tried in the burden and stress of a long and discouraging struggle who was able at last to weld thirteen jealous colonies into a nation. As history is actually written, he stands on a higher plane, even as a soldier, than the great captains who have won victory on a merely vast scale with vast resources.

With his superiority in men and staff organization, the elder Von Moltke must have been a dunderhead if he had not defeated France in 1870. Napoleon conducted war on a much more gigantic scale than Washington, but gigantic forces had been perfected for him by other men before he assumed command. Neither Moltke nor Napoleon ever mastered the overwhelming odds that confronted Washington when he "had to retreat with a handful of men across the Delaware in 1776, trembling for the fate of America."

Thus while Washington was struggling with an unstable

[1]Burgoyne surrendered October 17, 1777. On October 29th, Washington estimated Howe's force in Philadelphia at 10,000 men. On that day the total number of Continentals under Washington's immediate command was 8,313. But could Howe have taken Philadelphia earlier that year, if Washington had had 20,000 veterans at Brandywine?

army, his own prestige and influence were constantly growing. There were many times during the war when he alone was undefeated. More and more, his countrymen learned to trust not only his ability and his courage, but his patriotism and his absolute integrity. The darkest period of the Revolution was the month of December, 1776. Then when all seemed lost the country was thrilled into new hope and energy by the miracle of Trenton. Here was a defeated nation that could be saved only by the immediate stimulus of victory. And so Washington crossed the Delaware with twenty-four hundred ragged men and returned with nine hundred Hessian prisoners.

The whole story of the Revolution is told in Washington's letter of August 20th which we have quoted above. Under the policy of short enlistments he had virtually to discharge an army and form a new one every winter. While his army was periodically depleted from this cause he could only meet emergencies by temporary drafts of local militia. These militiamen were called not because Washington or anybody else relied upon them as of any value except for local defence against raids and forays such as the British had attempted at Concord. They were called because the Continental Army was always below its proper strength and this was solely because it had not been recruited for the whole war at the beginning. If forty thousand men had been taken for the duration of the war in 1775, all enlistments must have terminated with victory in less than two years.

In the autumn of 1776, Congress finally consented to increase the term of enlistment. But it was then too late to enlist a considerable force. From that time, however, small as it was, the Continental Army became a highly efficient force because many of its soldiers now served long enough to learn the soldier's trade and to acquire the soldier's spirit. And what it lacked in numerical strength it soon made up in quality. Under the scientific training of Baron Steuben at Valley Forge and the subsequent diffusion of his influence throughout the army, it became one of the most highly efficient bodies of troops in the history of the world.

CHAPTER IV

BARON VON STEUBEN[1]

I

IT IS well known that Baron von Steuben performed an indispensable service in perfecting the organization and discipline of the Continental Army. That this invaluable officer should have come out of Germany was in itself a striking German contribution to the American cause. But a more critical analysis of his history and his services will reveal that what Steuben brought us could have come from Germany alone. In no other country, at that time, could any officer have acquired the special training which Steuben placed at Washington's disposal. Nominally, he was Washington's Inspector General. Actually, he rendered Washington all of the services of a modern General Staff.

When Steuben reported at Valley Forge, he was a graduate of a school where he had been trained by the only competent professor of general staff duties then living in the world. This eminent pedagogue was one Frederick Hohenzollern, more generally known as Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. Toward the close of the Seven Years' War, Frederick had formed a class in Military Art, composed of young officers who had distinguished themselves by brilliant service in the field. The great king was himself the sole tutor of this class. Among his chosen pupils was his aide-de-camp, Captain Frederick William Augustus Henry Ferdinand, Baron von Steuben.

This royal class in tactics occupies an important place in the history of military institutions. It was the precursor of the *Kriegs Akademie* which Frederick was to establish a little later. It was therefore the first source of the trained

[1]Most of the material in this chapter appeared in an article in *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1928.

tactical officers who were to form the Prussian General Staff. Here Frederick employed the system of tactical instruction that later became known as the "applicatory method." It was by this method, more fully developed, that Moltke was to prepare his staff officers and his leaders for the wars of 1866 and 1870. It was by this method that the American Service Schools were eventually to train our leaders for the World War.

So, when Steuben reported to Washington at Valley Forge, he brought with him the essentials of the modern general staff institution—and this, thirty years before Scharnhorst established the Great General Staff in Berlin, eighty-eight years before its merits were revealed to an astonished world on the battlefield of König-Gratz, and one hundred and twenty-five years before Elihu Root proposed it as a desirable agency in the American War Department.

In order to understand the full significance of Steuben's American services, it is necessary to consider what general staff training really means. The phrase *general staff* does not convey the real meaning of the German word *generalstab*. It really means *general's staff* or *generalship staff*. Systematic training for this most important of all military specialties was perfected in Germany long before it was even thought of elsewhere. It happens that the real origin of this remarkable system is a part of the personal history of Frederick the Great. Though he emerged from the Seven Years' War with the most brilliant military reputation in modern history, his mastery of the art of war had been a gradual growth. His first campaign was not a credit to him. He had fled from the battlefield of Mollwitz thinking himself defeated. The sturdy army created for him by his father won the victory for him after he had fled from the field.

After this sorry beginning Frederick began to reflect upon the essential nature of successful command. He found that military success depends, not upon profound theoretical knowledge, but upon sound judgment and quick resolute decision under stress. Directing a successful attack is therefore not the same thing as writing an essay about it. It is a question of grasping a situation, making a practical decision,

and issuing intelligible orders to the several parts of a military command. It is a question of *applying* simple tactical principles in a particular crisis clearly, promptly, and resolutely. It is a question not merely of *knowing* but of *doing*.

This led Frederick to form the habit of giving himself tactical problems in his daily walks and rides. Carlyle gives us the following interesting glimpse of the great king after he had become a distinguished and successful general:

> For Friedrich is always looking out, were it even from the window of his carriage, and putting military problems to himself in all manner of scenery. What would a man do, in that kind of ground, if attacking, if attacked? With that hill, that brook, that bit of bog? And advises every officer to be continually doing the like. That is the value of picturesque or other scenery to Friedrich.

From making this a method of self-culture to making it a means of instructing others is but a step. Frederick soon found that by this method a competent instructor can carry a class of young officers through a series of military situations and make the exercises approximate to actual professional practice as opposed to mere theory. It is a continual test of judgment, of decision, and of facility in issuing effective orders.

But valuable as this system might be as a method of training, its greatest practical value to Frederick lay in the fact that it is also a method of measuring military capacity in time of peace. In competent hands, such as his, it became a "tactical measuring rod," an instrument of precision through which, without the actual test of war, he could determine whether an alleged troop leader or staff officer was a competent troop leader or staff officer in fact. It was by this means that he proposed to give the Prussian Army tested and calibrated leaders in the future. It was by this means and for this purpose that Baron von Steuben was trained and calibrated by Frederick the Great. So trained and so calibrated, he came to Washington at Valley Forge. An officer so trained and so calibrated is a general staff officer in fact, whatever his official label may be.

In considering Steuben's influence upon the Continental Army, we should therefore bear in mind that he was much more than a drill master. He gave Washington the best staff assistance then available in the world. Through him, the Commander-in-Chief was able to adapt the best experience of incomparably the best army then in existence. No British or French officer of that generation could possibly have approached Steuben as an educated, trained, and war-experienced professor of the science and art of war.

2

Steuben left the Prussian service in 1764, shortly after the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. Upon his retirement King Frederick gave him a "living" in the form of a lay benefice in the canonry of Havelsburg. For the next thirteen years he held important court appointments, first under the Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, and later under the Margrave of Baden at Karlsrühe. In 1777, through his friendship with Count St. Germain, the French Minister of War, he was induced to seek his fortune in America. He sailed from Marseilles on September 26th and after a tempestuous voyage, landed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, December 1, 1777.

From Portsmouth, on the 6th of December, Steuben wrote the following letter to the Continental Congress:

> Honorable Gentlemen:—The honor of serving a nation, engaged in the noble enterprise of defending its rights and liberties, was the motive that brought me to this continent. I ask neither riches nor titles. I am come here from the remotest end of Germany, at my own expense, and have given up an honorable and lucrative rank. I have made no condition with your deputies in France, nor shall I make any with you. My only ambition is to serve you as a volunteer, to deserve the confidence of your general-in-chief, and to follow him in all his operations, as I have done during seven campaigns with the King of Prussia. Two-and-twenty years spent in such a school seem to give me a right of thinking myself among the number of experienced officers; and if I am possessed of acquirements in the art of war, they will be much more prized

by me if I can employ them in the service of a republic such as I hope soon to see America. I should willingly purchase, at the expense of my blood, the honor of having my name enrolled among those of the defenders of your liberty. Your gracious acceptance will be sufficient for me, and I ask no other favor than to be received among your officers. I venture to hope that you will grant this my request, and that you will be so good as to send me your orders to Boston, where I shall await them, and take suitable measures in accordance.

On the same day, the Baron sent the following letter to General Washington:

SIR: The enclosed copy of a letter, the original of which I shall have the honor to present to Your Excellency, will inform you of the motives that brought me over to this land. I shall only add to it, that the object of my greatest ambition is to render your country all the service in my power, and to deserve the title of a citizen of America, by fighting for the cause of your liberty. If the distinguished ranks in which I have served in Europe should be an obstacle, I had rather serve under Your Excellency as a volunteer, than to be an object of discontent to such deserving officers as have already distinguished themselves among you. Such being the sentiments I have always professed, I dare hope that the respectable Congress of the United States of America will accept my services. I could say, moreover, were it not for the fear of offending your modesty, that Your Excellency is the only person under whom, after having served the King of Prussia, I could wish to follow a profession, to the study of which I have wholly devoted myself.

After a prolonged sojourn at Boston, where he awaited orders and arrangements for his transportation, Steuben set out to report to Congress. On February 5th he arrived at York, Pennsylvania, the temporary seat of government. Here he met a committee of Congress and offered his services as a volunteer. He asked for no military rank and for no pay. He explained that in leaving Germany, he had relinquished his appointments and his living. He proposed that if his services should be successful and if America should win her independence, he would expect the new republic to indem-

nify him for these sacrifices. He stated that if the American cause should fail, or if his services should not be worthy, he would present no claim whatever. In the meantime, he requested only that his future necessary expenses be paid and that the young officers in his suite should receive appropriate commissions in the American Army.

Congress was deeply impressed by Steuben's proposal to risk his fortune upon that of the United States and passed the following resolution:

> "*WHEREAS*, Baron Steuben, a lieutenant General in foreign service, has in a most disinterested and heroic manner offered his services to these States as a volunteer,
>
> *RESOLVED*, That the president present the thanks of Congress, on behalf of these United States, to Baron Steuben for the zeal he has shown for the cause of America, and the disinterested tender he has been pleased to make of his military talents, and inform him that Congress cheerfully accept of his services as a volunteer in the Army of these States, and wish him to repair to General Washington's quarters as soon as convenient.

3

The Baron left York on February 19th and arrived at Valley Forge on the 23rd. Here he was received with distinguished honors. Washington rode out several miles to meet him and escorted him to his quarters, where an officer with twenty-five men reported to him as a guard of honor. The countersign for the day was "Steuben." On the following day the Army was mustered and the Commander-in-Chief accompanied his guest to review it. A few days later Washington wrote to the Congress:

> Baron Steuben has arrived at camp. He appears to be much of a gentleman, and so far as I have had an opportunity of judging, a man of military knowledge and acquainted with the world.

Steuben's impression of the situation at Valley Forge is given briefly in the following extracts from his writings:

> The situation of affairs in general and of our own Army at Valley Forge in particular, is too well known to need a description. My determination must have been firm that I did not abandon my design when I saw the troops. Matters had to be remedied, but where to commence was the great difficulty. . . . The arms at Valley Forge were in a horrible condition, covered with rust, half of them without bayonets, many from which not a single shot could be fired. . . . The men were literally naked, some of them in the fullest extent of the word. The officers who had coats, had them of every color and make. I saw officers at a grand parade at Valley Forge, mounting guard in a sort of dressing gown, made of an old blanket or woolen bed cover. With regard to their military discipline, I may safely say no such thing existed. In the first place there was no regular formation. A so-called regiment was formed of three platoons, another of five, eight, nine, and the Canadian regiment of twenty-one. The formation of the regiments was as varied as their mode of drill, which only consisted of the manual exercise. Each Colonel had a system of his own, the one according to the English, the other according to the Prussian or the French style. There was only one thing in which they were uniform, and that was, the way of marching in the maneuvers and in the line of march. They all adopted the mode of marching in files used by the Indians. . . . It would be an endless task to enumerate the abuses which nearly ruined the army as I found it at Valley Forge in the month of February, 1778.

After giving Steuben a few days to examine the situation, Washington asked his advice. Steuben proposed the establishment of an inspectorship empowered to examine abuses and to recommend remedies. Washington approved the idea in principle and asked the Baron to prepare a scheme for the organization of such an office. This Steuben did and, recognizing his ignorance of American conditions, he secured the advice and assistance of Laurens, Greene, and Hamilton. When the plan thus completed was presented to Washington he approved it and asked the Baron to carry it into effect as a temporary Inspector with assistant inspectors to be detailed from the line.

Steuben now had the very opportunity he had crossed the

Atlantic to seek. How he availed himself of it, let him tell in his own words:

> I found it useless to trouble myself about the many things which I could not remedy. I directed my attention to the organization and discipline of the army. . . . I commenced operations by drafting one hundred and twenty men from the line, whom I formed into a guard for the General-in-Chief. I made this guard my military school. I drilled them myself twice a day; and to remove that English prejudice which some officers entertained, namely, that to drill a recruit was a sergeant's duty and beneath the station of an officer, I often took the musket myself to show the men the manual exercise which I wished to introduce. All my inspectors were present at each drill. We marched together, wheeled, etc., and in a fortnight my company knew perfectly how to bear arms, had a military air, knew how to march, to form in column, deploy and execute some little maneuvers with excellent precision. . . . It must be owned that they did not know much of the manual exercise, and I ought to mention the reasons why I departed altogether from the general rule of all European Armies, and commenced with the manual exercise in drilling recruits like children learning their alphabet. In the first place I had no time to do otherwise. In our European Armies a man who has been drilled for three months is called a recruit; here, in two months, I must have a soldier. . . .
>
> To follow the thread of my operations, I had my company of Guards exactly as I wished them to be. They were well dressed, their arms clean and in good order and their general appearance quite respectable.
>
> I paraded them in the presence of all the officers of the Army, and gave them an opportunity of exhibiting all they knew. They formed in column, deployed, attacked with the bayonet, changed front, etc., etc. It afforded a new and agreeable sight for the young officers and soldiers. Having gained my point, I dispersed my apostles, the inspectors, and my new doctrine was eagerly embraced. I lost no time in extending my operations on a large scale. I applied my system to battalions, afterwards to brigades, and in less than three weeks I executed maneuvers with an entire division in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief.

Steuben's tactical course for the army as a whole commenced on the 24th of March and terminated in "grand maneuvers" on the 29th of April. Two months later, on the 28th of June, his tactical system received its battle test on the field of Monmouth. On that day, and thereafter throughout the war, the American Citizen Army proved itself equal, battalion for battalion, to the British Regulars.

4

A letter written from Valley Forge gives us the following impression of Steuben's influence upon the Continental Army:

> Baron Steuben presents us a truly noble example. He has undertaken the discipline of the army, and shows himself a perfect master of it, not only in the grand maneuvers but in the most minute details. To see a gentleman, dignified with a lieutenant general's commission from the great Prussian monarch,[1] condescend, with a grace peculiar to himself, to take under his direction a squad of ten or twelve men in the capacity of drill-sergeant, commands the admiration of both officers and men, and causes them to improve exceedingly fast under his instructions.

Steuben's personal peculiarities also appealed to the soldiers and awakened first their amusement and later their affection. It appears that he had a violent temper which found difficult expression in his broken English. But according to Duponceau, who served as his secretary and aide-de-camp:

> His fits of passion never offended the soldiers. When some movement or maneuver was not performed to his mind, he began to swear in German and then in French, and then in both languages together. When he had exhausted his artillery of

[1]The erroneous impression that Steuben was a lieutenant general in the Prussian Army was widespread at that time. It seems to have been due to a misunderstanding on the part of Benjamin Franklin who transmitted it from Paris in his letters of introduction. Steuben's only commission as a general officer was in the Circle of Suabia, a species of Imperial Militia.

> foreign oaths he would call to his aids, "My dear Walker, (or my dear Duponceau) come and swear for me in English—these fellows will not do what I bid them." A good-natured smile then went through the ranks, and at last the maneuver or the movement was perfectly performed.

Indeed, tradition preserves the Baron's precise language on one of these interesting occasions:

> . . . "*Viens*, Walker, *mon ami, viens, mon bon ami, Sacré* God dam de gaucheries of dese badauts, *je ne puis plus*. I can curse dem no more."

Duponceau gives us another glimpse of Baron Steuben at Valley Forge:

> Once with the Baron's permission, his aids invited a number of young officers to dine at our quarters, on condition that none should be admitted that had a whole pair of breeches. This was of course understood as *pars pro toto;* but torn clothes were an indispensable requisite for admission, and in this the guests were very sure not to fail. The dinner took place. The guests clubbed their rations, and we feasted sumptuously on tough beefsteak and potatoes, with hickory nuts for our desert. Instead of wine, we had some kind of spirits with which we made "salamanders," that is to say, after filling our glasses, we set the liquor on fire and drank it up, flame and all. Such a set of ragged, and at the same time merry fellows, were never brought together. The Baron loved to speak of that dinner and of his "Sansculottes" as he called us. Thus this denomination was first invented in America and applied to the brave officers and soldiers of our revolutionary army.

The key to Steuben's success as a military instructor lay in the power of example. In acting as drill-master for his little guard company, he created a new spirit in the Continental Army. He still stands as the true model for the professional instructor of citizen soldiers in the modern democratic state. His guard company is an example of what is now known as a "demonstration unit." In inventing it as a training agency, he anticipated our present general staff by more than a century. But he is still far ahead of the times. His experiment also proves that the best "demonstration

unit" for citizen soldiers is one composed solely of citizen soldiers. So composed, it teaches confidence, self-reliance, and self-respect as well as drill. It is an "inspiration unit" as well as a "demonstration unit." The little guard company composed of ragged soldiers drawn from each regiment was a better model for Valley Forge than King Frederick's best Guards Company could have been.

When Steuben landed at Portsmouth, he was still a soldier of fortune—a foreign adventurer. Two months later, after his overland journey to York, he wrote in a letter to John Hancock, "Now, Sir, I am an American, and an American for life." The most remarkable thing about him was his quick appreciation of the American character and of the spirit of democracy. This is most striking in a professional soldier reared in the rigid school of Frederick the Great. He saw that he could not make Prussian grenadiers out of the colonial Americans, but he saw that he could make them something better. In a letter to an old comrade in arms, Baron de Gaudy, he said:

> In the first place the genius of this nation is not in the least to be compared with that of the Prussians, Austrians, or French. You say to your soldier, "Do this," and he doeth it. But I am obliged to say, "This is the reason why you ought to do that," and then he does it.

5

It is characteristic of Washington's habitual prudence that he tried Steuben as an acting inspector before recommending his permanent appointment. But the period of probation was a short one. In a little more than two months after his arrival at Valley Forge, the Baron had proved his competency and had established his prestige throughout the army. On the 30th of April, Washington recommended his appointment to a vacant inspectorship which had been created originally for Conway. On the 5th of May, by resolution of Congress, Steuben became Inspector General of the Army with rank of Major General.

When Clinton evacuated Philadelphia and Washington

started in pursuit, Steuben served him as a staff officer. In a brilliant general staff reconnaissance, he secured contact with the British Army and ascertained its future objective. When Washington's plan for a decisive battle at Monmouth was defeated by the disloyalty and incompetency of Charles Lee, Steuben was ordered to rally Lee's shattered division and to bring it back into the battle. He accomplished this difficult maneuver with brilliant success. For the next month he remained in command of the division. Like all true soldiers he sought the honor and responsibility of command. When Washington found it necessary to relieve him and to order him back to staff duty, he was so chagrined that he contemplated leaving the service. Eventually his devotion and loyalty to Washington prevailed and he returned to the less conspicuous but more important duties for which he alone was qualified. And Washington was right. Steuben could be replaced as a division commander but no one could have replaced him in his special field. For he was much more than an inspector. His proposals molded the organization, administration, supply, training and operations of the army. In this he performed all the duties of a modern general staff.

During the autumn of 1778 Steuben began the preparation of his *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*. This manual was known to the army as the *Blue Book*, and was the basis of its discipline and efficiency. In it Steuben condensed the essentials, but only the essentials, of the military information and instructions required for officers and men. It was approved by Congress in March, 1779, and was printed and issued to the army. The *Blue Book* was the bible of the Continental Army. It was drill regulations, administrative manual, and field service regulations combined.

In July, 1779, a detachment of light infantry under Anthony Wayne captured Stony Point and its garrison without firing a shot. This was one of the most brilliant exploits in the military annals of the Eighteenth Century. Wayne is justly credited with the victory. But as it could only have been won by troops of the highest training and discipline, it marks the triumph of Steuben's training system. In the

days at Valley Forge he had complained that he could not convert his pupils to the use of their bayonets. The colonials considered them only fit for toasting beefsteak and as they were not worth carrying for that alone, they generally "lost" them. The capture of Stony Point at the point of the bayonet and without firing a shot marked a new triumph for the Baron and his *Blue Book*.

The day after the victory, Washington visited Stony Point with his staff. When the young soldiers saw the Inspector General they surrounded him and assured him that in the future they would not lose their bayonets or roast meat with them. The Baron improved the opportunity to secure an order from the Commander-in-Chief that thereafter bayonets should not be removed from the muskets. From that day the Americans kept their bayonets "fixed."

6

Shortly after the capture of Stony Point, Steuben exercised another function of the general staff. By direction of Washington, he prepared what is now called "an estimate of the situation." In this paper, in true general staff style, he weighed the relative strengths of the British and American forces and carefully considered every possible means of assuming the offensive. But the preponderance of hostile strength was so great that he could only recommend the vigilant waiting attitude on the Hudson which Washington adopted.

In the early summer of 1780, Washington caused his general staff officer to make another "Estimate of the Situation." In this one, Steuben considers the favorable prospect of increased strength in the Continental Army and of French support. Subject to these contingencies, he points out several promising lines of offensive action and recommends an attitude of readiness for them. In September, 1780, after the failure of the States to furnish their new contingents and the prolonged delay of the French, he makes another "Estimate" as to the best means of continuing the war effectively now that the means for decisive action had failed.

After the surrender of Cornwallis, there was more than a year of inactivity. In the following spring, Washington was eager to bring the war to an end by wresting New York from General Carleton. Again he called upon Steuben for a general staff study. But again a survey of the available resources proved the enterprise to be impracticable. All of these studies are highly competent general staff documents. They show the relations between a commanding general and his chief of the general staff, both forced to a defensive attitude, but both eagerly seeking the first opportunity for decisive action.

Steuben's services at Yorktown were most conspicuous. As a veteran of the Seven Years' War, he was the only officer in the American Army who had had extended experience in siege operations. This was of great value to the Commander-in-Chief. At Yorktown, Steuben also achieved the coveted honor of command. On the 11th of October, his division opened the second parallel about 360 yards from the enemy's batteries. It was also during the Baron's tour in the trenches that Cornwallis made his first overtures. They therefore passed through his hands.

Perhaps the finest tribute to Steuben's reputation is to be found in the following "Creed Adopted by the Officers of the American Army" at Verplanck's Point in 1782:

> We believe that there is a great First Cause by whose almighty will we are formed: and that our business here is to obey the orders of our superiors. We believe that every soldier who does his duty will be happy here, and that every such one who dies in battle, will be happy hereafter. We believe that George Washington is the only fit man in the world to head the American Army. We believe that Nathaniel Greene was born a general. We believe that the evacuation of Ticonderoga was one of those strokes which stamp the man who dares to strike them, with everlasting fame. We believe that Baron Steuben has made us soldiers, and that he is capable of forming the whole world into a solid column, and deploying it from the center. We believe in his Blue Book. We believe in General Knox and his artillery. And we believe in our bayonets. Amen!

CHAPTER V

CITIZEN SOLDIERS OR PROFESSIONALS?

I

After our brief review of the Revolution and with Baron Steuben duly introduced as his trusted military adviser, we may now return to a further consideration of the "Peace Establishment" which Washington proposed at Newburg in 1783.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, we find him recommending the retention and development of the very institutions that the Massachusetts Provincial Congress had adopted at the beginning of that struggle. These institutions were a general organization of the national man-power for local defence and a Continental Army to be drawn from the general body of the militia for sustained military operations. Washington considered these institutions entirely sufficient for our future security. He therefore proposed that a portion of the younger men of the militia should be organized and trained in time of peace so that they would be available as a new Continental Army in the event of future emergency. He proposed to organize the national militia so as to accomplish this object. This is what he meant by *a well-regulated Militia.*

This will be an appropriate place to dispose of a widespread and long-standing misinterpretation of Washington's military views. His letters to Congress and other papers written during the Revolution have been cited repeatedly as arguments for a professional standing army and against reliance upon citizen soldiers. And indeed an uncritical or disingenuous reader of Washington's writings might draw many passages from their context in such a manner as to support this view. For example, in September, 1776, in the course of

a letter to the President of Congress in which he described his situation after the Battle of Long Island, he said:

> All these circumstances fully confirm the opinion I ever entertain, and which I more than once in my letters took the liberty of mentioning to Congress, *that no dependence could be put in a militia*[1] or other troops than those enlisted and embodied for a longer period than our regulations heretofore have prescribed. *I am persuaded, and as fully convinced as I am of any one fact that has happened, that our liberties must of necessity be greatly hazarded, if not entirely lost, if their defence is left to any but a permanent standing army:*[2] I mean one to exist during the war.

The sole object of this letter was to stress the disastrous effect of short enlistments in the Continental Army. Due to that cause, Washington had had to disband the New England Army in December of 1775 and to create a new army for the campaign of 1776. The army of 1776 was now approaching the time of its dissolution for the same cause, and under the policy of Congress he would soon be called upon to form a new army for the campaign of 1777. He *did* want a "permanent standing army," but in demanding it, he expressly said, "*I mean one to exist for the War.*" He *did* denounce the policy of using local drafts of home-defence militia to make up shortages in this permanent force. But the permanent army that he sought was itself, a citizen army, a special fraction of the militia. Its modern prototype is an organized citizenry like our present National Guard, and not our present Regular Army.

No writing of Washington's, if critically interpreted, can be cited as an argument for resting our national defence, in the slightest degree, upon a professional standing army. No such conception found a place in the mind of any intelligent American until after the War of 1812—long after Washington was borne to his grave. In his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," he did not recommend a "well-regulated militia"

[1]The italics are mine.

[2]The italics are mine.

merely as a *pis-aller*, because public sentiment would not permit him to have a standing army. He preferred his "well-regulated militia" to an expansible standing army for many moral, political, and economic reasons. He preferred it because it was the traditional military institution of his race, because it was more consistent with the genius of republican institutions, but, particularly, because he considered it a more effective, more powerful, and more economical means of national defence. In this opinion all of his generals concurred. Indeed his most competent technical military adviser, Baron von Steuben, had assured him that "a system of this nature will make us more respectable with the powers of Europe than if we keep up an army of fifty thousand men."[1]

2

But while Washington was confident that the solution lay in organizing and training a relatively small fraction of the military population, he realized that this could be done in several ways. In the papers before him, General Pickering had just suggested one feasible method, General Rufus Putnam another, General Knox another, and Baron Steuben still another. It was always characteristic of Washington to look at the heart of a problem without tying himself dogmatically to any one of several feasible methods of solution. He therefore goes on to say:

> It is not for me to decide positively, whether it will be ultimately most interesting to the happiness and safety of the United States, to form this Class of Soldiers into a kind of Continental Militia, selecting every 10th, 15th or 20th Man from the Rolls of each State for the purpose; Organizing, Officering and Commissioning those Corps upon the same principle as is now practiced in the Continental Army—[*Here Washington suggested a force like our present National Guard. This method was worked out later in elaborate detail by Baron Steuben*]—Whether it will be best to comprehend in this body, all Men fit

[1] A standing army of 50,000 men would have been a considerable force in 1783, considering that the population of the United States was then less than four million.

> for service between some given age and no others, for example between 18 and 25 or some similar description"—[*Here Washington suggested an American adaptation of the Swiss system as another feasible solution. Later General Knox worked out a plan on this basis which Washington submitted to Congress after he became President*]—or whether it will be preferable in every Regiment of the proposed Establishment to have one additional Company inlisted or drafted from the best Men for 3, 5, or 7 years and distinguished by the name of the additional or light Infantry Company always to be kept complete. These Companies might then be drawn together occasionally and formed into particular Battalions or Regiments under Field Officers appointed for that service.

Having thus indicated that there are several feasible solutions, Washington then summarizes the whole matter as follows:

> One or other of these plans I think will be found indispensably necessary, if we are in earnest to have an efficient force ready for Action at a moments warning. And I cannot conceal my private sentiment, that the formation of additional or light companies will be most consistent with the genius of our Countrymen and perhaps in their opinion most consonant to the Spirit of our Constitution.

In other words, as a practical politician and statesman as well as a military expert, Washington favored that method of reform which was least apt to provoke political opposition. He would be glad to have a Continental Militia like our present National Guard or he would be glad to have an organization like the Swiss System. But a too radical reform of the existing Colonial Militia would arouse the opposition of its officers. His preference for a special light company in each militia regiment was frankly based on considerations of political expediency.

The general body of the militia was already organized more or less effectively under the Act of 1775. The important thing was to segregate its younger and more active men into separate organizations for better training in time of peace. A proposal to form them into a new and distinct Continental

Militia entirely separate from the existing militia would almost certainly offend the pride and arouse the active opposition of that force. On the other hand, to put the younger men into training companies, one in each of the existing regiments, would leave them under the control of the existing militia commanders and would enlist their support and assistance in initiating an important reform. In this way the essential first step would be taken with less appearance of innovation. With this accomplished, the logical second step could be left to the future.

Furthermore, as special light companies had been formed in the Continental Army during the war, he was really proposing to perpetuate a familiar institution. Washington was never a military pedant. He was a shrewd practical politician as well as a constructive statesman. He knew that it is rarely good politics to advocate a complete new institution *de novo*. He therefore proposed the best first step that seemed "consistent with the genius of our countrymen," and which, "in their opinion," would be "most consonant to the spirit of our Constitution."

3

Both General Pickering and General Knox, in their recommendations to General Washington, had stressed the importance of having uniform regulations prepared for the instruction and discipline of the proposed national militia and of having an Inspector General appointed for the supervision of the system. General Pickering had specifically mentioned Baron Steuben as the person preëminently fitted for this most important constructive task. In making this recommendation, Pickering must have voiced the general sentiment. Steuben's *Blue Book* had been the foundation of the discipline and training of the Continental Army and Steuben for five years had been its Inspector General. Who better than he could transmit its discipline and traditions to that Continental Army of the future which Washington now sought to perpetuate in his "well-regulated militia"?

Washington's action on Pickering's recommendation is

characteristic of his habitual tact and restraint. In this connection he wrote:

> I shall not contend for names or forms, it will be altogether essential, and it will be sufficient that perfect Uniformity should be established throughout the Continent, and pervade, as far as possible, every Corps whether of standing Troops or Militia, and of whatever denomination they may be. To avoid the confusion of a contrary practice, and to produce the happy consequences which will attend a uniform system of Service, in case Troops from the different parts of the Continent shall ever be brought to Act together again, *I would beg leave to propose, that Congress should employ some able hand to digest a code of Military Rules and regulations, calculated immediately for the Militia and other Troops of the United States;*[1] And as it should seem the present system, by being a little simplified, altered, and improved, might be very well adapted to the purpose; I would take the liberty of recommending, that measures should be immediately taken for the accomplishment of this interesting business, *and that an Inspector General should be appointed to superintend the execution of the proposed regulations in the several States.*[1]

Nobody knew Baron Steuben's qualifications for this office better than Washington. But Washington, the military commander, was always a model of strict propriety and dignified deference in his communications with the superior civil authority. He therefore confined himself to the terms imposed by his invitation from Congress. He had been invited to propose effective measures. This justified his recommendation that there should be an Inspector General of the National Militia. But he would not presume to nominate an incumbent to fill the office, unless and until he should be invited to do so. Should that invitation come there could be little doubt whom Washington would choose.

Having defined the fundamental principles of a well-regulated militia and having stressed the importance of uniform regulations under competent national supervision, Washington proceeds as follows:

[1]The italics are mine.

Before I close my remarks on the Stablishment of our National Militia, which is to be the future guardian of those rights & that Independence, which have been maintained so gloriously, by the fortitude and perseverance of our Countrymen, I shall descend a little more minutely to the interior arrangements, and sum up what I have to say on this head with the following Positions.

With this prelude Washington gives his detailed recommendations on the organization, training, and equipment of the proposed national force. As these recommendations are given in full in Appendix I (page 391), they will not be summarized here. But it will be interesting to note that they became the basis of our first National Defence Bill[1] which was introduced in the House of Representatives by Elias Boudinot on the 1st day of July, 1790. It was this highly constructive administration measure which finally passed as the notorious Militia Act of 1792—after all of Washington's essential provisions for "a well-regulated militia" had been adroitly and deliberately amended out of it.

[1]See Chapter X.

CHAPTER VI

MILITARY ACADEMIES AND MANUFACTURIES

I

HAVING disposed of the first three[1] subheads of his subject, Washington then proceeds as follows:

> Under the fourth General Division of the subject, it was proposed to consider the Establishment of Military Academies and Manufacturies, as the means of preserving that knowledge and being possessed of those Warlike Stores, which are essential to the support of the Sovereignty and Independence of the United States. But as the Baron Steuben has thrown together his Ideas very largely on these Articles, which he had communicated to me previous to their being sent to the Secretary at War,[2] and which being lodged at the War Office, I imagine have also been submitted to the inspection of the Committee, I shall therefore have the less occasion for entering into the detail, and may, without impropriety, be the more concise in my own observations.

Baron Steuben's memoir on "Military Academies and Manufacturies" is a highly elaborate general staff document. He treated the two subjects together because, for reasons of economy, he proposed to put his military schools and his

[1]Washington's third subhead was "Establishing Arsenals of all kinds of Military Stores." For his remarks in full on this subject, see Appendix I, page 393.

[2]The original of this document is included in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (No. 38, page 443). It was transmitted by Baron Steuben April 16, 1783, after he had received Washington's request (April 14) for his sentiments on a peace establishment. A version of this document in French, probably Steuben's first draft, is among the "Steuben Papers" in the archives of the New York Historical Society.

ordnance factories under the same administrative overhead. He proposed three of these composite institutions: one for New England, one for the middle group of Colonies, and one for the southern group. Among the officers then serving in the Continental Army there were many competent engineers, artillerists, and staff officers. Some of these were highly trained foreign officers, some were Americans who had risen in the school of experience. Also among the enlisted men there were many non-commissioned officers and privates who had become expert military artificers, familiar with the manufacture, repair, and storage of munitions and equipment. Steuben proposed to retain enough of this personnel to form his three centers for future military preparedness.

In each of these three centers, and under the same administrative staff, some experts would supervise manufacture, some would instruct military cadets, and some would divide their time between these two important duties. It is interesting to record that one of Steuben's three centers of future preparedness was to be at West Point. For strategic reasons, this place had become an important fortress and ordnance depot during the Revolutionary War. It was therefore the logical place for the military academy and munitions plant which Steuben proposed for the Middle Colonies.

In view of the backward state of our manufacturing industries in 1783, there was much to be said for Steuben's ordnance scheme. Federal arsenals, if not federal factories, were certainly needed. It is highly significant that our first general staff officer should plan for *matériel* as well as for *personnel*. But his conception of a military academy is especially interesting. He proposed that each of his three schools should have 120 cadets with a three-years' course of study. The three academies together would thus produce about one hundred military graduates each year. He proposed that each cadet should pay three hundred dollars per year toward board and tuition. He recommended that vacancies in the regular army or frontier constabulary should be filled by the appointment of graduates from the military academies. But he carefully stipulated that all such post-graduate military service should be purely voluntary.

A consideration of these proposals will show that, in Steuben's mind, training officers for the regular army proper was an incidental and relatively unimportant object for a military academy. The professional establishment as he proposed it would comprise only 271 officers. Some of its vacancies must be filled by the promotion of worthy non-commissioned officers from the ranks. About ten graduates per year would therefore suffice to fill its needs. It is obvious, then, that about 90 per cent. of the Baron's military graduates would return to civil life. And it was the return of educated officers to civil life that was the keynote of Steuben's scheme of military education. He expected all of them to *diffuse* sound military opinion throughout the nation. He expected most of them to become leaders in his well-regulated militia. The first officer corps of this citizen army would be selected veterans of the Revolutionary War. He proposed his military academies as a means for perpetuating that officer corps as a permanent national institution.

But out of Steuben's 271 professional officers, only 134 would be required with the Frontier Constabulary or regular army proper. The remainder would be employed in the central administration and in the overhead of the military schools and arsenals. Thus more than half of his professional officers would be constantly employed in the overhead of the citizen army itself. Thus Steuben, the accomplished professional soldier, defined the true place of the professional soldier in the modern democratic state. He proposed no more professionals than those strictly needed to develop the latent military genius of the people themselves. It is interesting to find that Washington,[1] the citizen soldier, and Steuben, the professional soldier, fully agreed on this. In the minds of both, the military academy was to be a *normal school* to develop trained officers and instructors for a well-regulated militia.

[1]President Washington's first formal proposal to Congress looking toward the establishment of a National Military Academy was contained in his Annual Message of December 3, 1793. There it is clear that he had it in mind primarily as a means of extending theoretical military knowledge to the militia. See Chapter XII.

The curriculum which Steuben proposed for his military academies was largely conditioned by the general backward state of education at that time. As there were few good secondary schools, still fewer colleges, and no technical schools at all, it would be necessary to give his cadets a more or less general education. In addition to this the cadets would be under constant military discipline. At each of the three academies, eighty young men would be prepared for the infantry, twenty for the cavalry, and twenty for the artillery and engineers. As each school would be located at the same place with a munitions plant, and as both institutions would be under the same supervision, the cadets would have the fullest opportunity to receive practical instruction in ordnance and supply. And furthermore, though Steuben does not specifically mention it, we may be sure that in his scheme of military training, he would not omit the system of tactical instruction which he had received from Frederick the Great.

The great practical objection to Steuben's plan was its cost. This was not excessive, but the government under the Confederation was bankrupt and the Continental Congress had no effective financial powers. Steuben took this into consideration and included detailed estimates of cost. He showed that if the account could be credited with the market value of the arms and munitions to be produced and with the fees to be received from the cadets, the net cost would be very small. This no doubt was true, but the government had no funds and no inclination to spend any money at all on munitions of any kind. Steuben showed a good return for the proposed outlay, but any expenditure for military purposes was impracticable. The government was unable to pay current expenses and the interest on the existing debt. It had no powers of taxation and its credit was exhausted.

2

The papers submitted to Washington by his other generals indicate that they were familiar with Steuben's scheme of military education and that it had been a frequent subject of discussion among them. General Knox endorsed the Baron's

school plan fully. In his letter dated April 17, 1783, he recommended "that a complete system of military education should be formed and adopted; that there should be three military academies where the United States arsenals are,—one in the Northern, one in the Middle, and one in the Southern States."

In General Pickering's letter to Washington, dated April 14th, he also refers to military academies. He had evidently discussed the subject with Steuben who was then completing his educational project for the Secretary of War. General Pickering agreed with Baron Steuben in principle, but as Quartermaster General he was strongly impressed by the facts of the financial situation. He therefore considered Steuben's project too ambitious, at least for the present. Accordingly, in his letter to Washington, he says:

> If anything like a military academy in America be practicable at this time, it must be grounded on the permanent military establishment for our frontier posts and arsenals, and the wants of the States, separately, of officers to command the defences on their seacoasts.
>
> On this principle it might be expedient to establish a military school, or academy, at West Point. And that a competent number of young men might be induced to become students, it might be made a rule, that vacancies in the standing regiment should be supplied from them; those few instances excepted where it would be just to promote a very meritorious sergeant.

Pickering then goes on to suggest that the number of national cadets should be fixed primarily by the probable number of vacancies in the regular establishment and that the cadets selected for this purpose should be subsisted at public expense. But he fully appreciates the value of training a greater number for the militia and proposes that additional students should be admitted to be subsisted at their own expense. (Or at the expense of their States. See first paragraph in the above quotation.) That Pickering agreed fully with Steuben in principle is indicated by his final recommendation that the course of instruction at the academy should be superintended by the Inspector General himself.

This recommendation of General Pickering's has frequently been cited as the first definite proposal for a military academy at West Point designed primarily to train officers for the regular army. But it should be noted that his recommendation in that restricted form was made solely because he did not consider it practicable, at that particular time, to give his full endorsement to Steuben's more comprehensive project. And it will be noted also that even in this restricted project he recognizes the importance of a general *diffusion* of military education—but at the expense of individual students or of their several States.

General Pickering's misgivings as to the immediate practical aspect of Steuben's educational plan was shared by Benjamin Lincoln, the Secretary of War, who wrote to the Baron as follows on the 27th of April:

DEAR BARON:

I have been honored with your favor of the 16th instant covering a system for the Military Academy.

I am exceedingly obliged by your attention to this subject and for your well digested and judicious arrangements—please to accept my most cordial thanks.

I am fully convinced what is the interest of the United States but cannot be so certain what line of conduct they will pursue. However the Committee have under consideration your observations—If I differ with them in my report it will not be because I think them not well calculated to promote the general Interest but from a full conviction that so necessary and extensive a plan cannot be carried in Congress. I hope you will be heard before your plans shall be rejected.

If the very best measures cannot be obtained we must at present be content with the next.

I have the honor to be
Dear Baron,
With great esteem
Your most obd. servant
B. LINCOLN.

3

When Washington made his own recommendations on military education he had read Steuben's project and had

discussed its provisions with him. He had also read its full endorsement by Knox and its more qualified and cautious endorsement by General Pickering. Even more than Pickering he appreciated the state of the finances and the limited powers of Congress. He therefore felt the practical necessity of presenting his views in a conservative manner. To urge too much at such a time would remove his proposals from the domain of the practical. We therefore find him saying:

> That an institution calculated to keep alive and diffuse the knowledge of the Military Art would be highly expedient, and that some kinds of Military Manufactories and Elaboratories may and ought to be established, will not admit a doubt; but how far we are able at this time to go into great and expensive Arrangements and whether the greater part of the Military Apparatus and Stores which will be wanted can be imported or Manufactured, in the cheapest and best manner; I leave to those to whom the observations are to be submitted, to determine, as being more competent to the decision than I can pretend to be. I must however mention some things, which I think cannot be dispensed with under the present or any other circumstances; *Until a more perfect system of Education can be adopted*,[1] I would propose that Provision should be made at some Post or Posts where the principle Engineers and Artillerists shall be stationed, for instructing a certain number of young Gentlemen in the Theory of the Art of War, particularly in all those branches of service which belong to the Artillery and Engineering Departments. Which, from the affinity they bear to each other, and the advantages which I think would result from the measure, I would have blended together; And as this species of knowledge will render them much more accomplished and capable of performing the duties of Officers, even in the Infantry or any other Corps whatsoever, I conceive that appointments to vacancies in the Established Regiments, ought to be made from the candidates who shall have completed their course of Military Studies and Exercises. As it does in an essential manner qualify them for the duties of Garrisons, which will be the principal, if not only service in which our Troops can be employed in time of Peace and besides the Regiments of Infantry by this means

[1]The italics are mine.

will become in time a nursery from whence a number of Officers for Artillery and Engineering may be drawn on any great or sudden occasion.

Of so great importance is it to preserve the knowledge which has been acquired thro' the various Stages of a long and arduous service, that I cannot conclude without repeating the necessity of the proposed Institution, unless we intend to let the Science become extinct, and to depend entirely upon the Foreigners for their friendly aid, if ever we should be again involved in Hostility. For it must be understood, that a Corps of able Engineers and expert Artillerists can not be raised in a day, nor made such by any exertions, in the same time, which it would take to form an excellent body of Infantry from a well regulated Militia.[1]

In the last paragraph above cited, it is apparent that Washington sought a system of military education through which America would be able to produce her own Baron Steubens in the future. It is also apparent that in seeking such a system he was strongly influenced by the Baron's advice and followed it, in the main, quite as far as the financial and political situation permitted.

4

It may now be interesting to summarize the remarkable activity at the headquarters of the American Army during the latter half of April, 1783. On the 13th day of that month General Washington was called upon by a committee of Congress to submit his views upon the proper military policy for the new American republic. The following day he submitted this problem to the generals at or near headquarters for their recommendations. A reply came from General Knox on the 17th, from Baron von Steuben on the 21st, from

[1]For Washington's recommendation on military education in full, see Appendix I. In stressing the special difficulties in connection with the training of artillery and engineers, Washington had in mind his experience at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. In 1784, however, as we shall see in the next chapter, he approved Steuben's plan for a Continental Militia, in which the Baron convinced him that, with proper arrangements, artillery, cavalry, and other auxiliaries can be organized and trained as readily as infantry.

General Pickering on the 22d, and from General Rufus Putnam on the 25th. All of these replies indicated careful consideration and were in full agreement as to all essentials of military policy. On the first day of May, after considering all of the papers submitted to him, General Washington completed his own memoir on the subject of a peace establishment for the United States.

It is probable that no problem of national military policy was ever submitted to a more competent body of military experts. It included the greatest citizen soldier of all time and the most accomplished professional military expert then living. In addition to these it included a number of officers who had risen to high rank through sheer merit in a prolonged and arduous war. That the work of this body of men should have been accomplished so speedily is a remarkable indication that they had severally studied the question at issue and that it had frequently been the subject of discussion among them. In their work as a whole we recognize the profound influence of Baron Steuben's scientific training tempered by Washington's strong common sense and practical statesmanship.

The resulting military policy was very simple. The Revolutionary War had been won by a continental army composed of citizen soldiers drawn from the general body of the militia. Washington simply proposed to assure the speedy formation of a similar continental army in the event of future emergency. He therefore recommended that a portion of the younger men of the militia should be grouped together and trained in time of peace in such a manner as to permit their prompt mobilization as a continental army. This being his main objective, all details of his plan were subordinated to it. The problem of armament was to be the simple and definite problem of arming this force. The problem of training was simply the problem of training a militia well-regulated in this sense. The problem of military education was primarily the problem of educating militia officers in peace for their service in the continental war army. The plan also included a small standing army to serve as a constabulary on the Indian frontier. But had there been no Indian problem there

would have been no regular army at all in Washington's Military Policy of the United States.

And how could this constructive record have remained unpublished all these years? The answer is largely to be found in the editorial shortcomings of the Reverend Jared Sparks. Sparks made his selections from *The Washington Papers* between 1827 and 1837. In his published *Writings of Washington*, he omitted Washington's Newburg memoir on National Defence. Later, when he published his *Correspondence of the American Revolution*, Sparks omitted the memoirs on the same subject which were submitted to Washington by Knox, Pickering, Rufus Putnam, and Baron Steuben. The effect of these omissions was the complete suppression of Washington's record as a constructive military statesman.

CHAPTER VII

HOW BARON STEUBEN INVENTED THE NATIONAL GUARD[1]

I

WASHINGTON'S "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" and Steuben's project for military academies and manufacturies were considered by Alexander Hamilton's Committee of the Continental Congress during the months of May and June, 1783. But nothing could be done at that time. The Confederation was literally bankrupt. In a letter written by Robert Morris on the 13th of June we learn that there was a treasury deficit of a million dollars and that the proceeds from taxation since 1781 had amounted to less than seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. There was no money to pay current expenses, no money to pay off the army, no money to pay the interest on the public debt. There was no revenue and no credit. It was manifestly impossible, in these circumstances, for the Congress to consider any constructive proposal.

On the 2nd of November Washington issued his Farewell Address to the army. The following day the army was disbanded except one small regiment of infantry and two battalions of artillery. Even this small force was reduced a little later to one battery of eighty men to guard the stores at Fort Pitt and at West Point. On the 23rd of December, Washington relinquished the command of the army at Annapolis. It is most significant that his last official act as

[1]Some of the material of this chapter appeared in an article in *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1928.

Commander-in-Chief was the preparation of the following letter to Baron Steuben:

My dear Baron:—

Altho' I have taken frequent Opportunities, both in public and in private, of Acknowledging your great Zeal, Attention and Abilities, in performing the duties of your Office, yet I wish to make use of this last Moment of my public life, to Signify, in the strongest terms, my entire Approbation of your Conduct, and to express my Sense of the Obligations the public is under to you, for your faithful and Meritorious Services.

I beg you will be convinced, my dear Sir, that I should rejoice if it could ever be in my power to serve you more essentially than by expressions of regard and Affection; but, in the meantime, I am persuaded you will not be displeased with this farewell token of my Sincere Friendship and Esteem for you.

This is the last letter I shall write while I continue in the Service of my Country. The hour of my Resignation is fixed at twelve today, after which I shall become a private Citizen, on the banks of the Potomack, where I shall be glad to embrace you, and testify the great Esteem and Consideration with which

I am My Dear Baron

Your most Obedt and Affectn.

G° Washington.

2

Baron Steuben continued his scientific study of our national defence system after he submitted his memorandum to Washington on the 21st of April, 1783. On that occasion he had emphasized the fundamental importance of a well-regulated militia and had suggested certain details of tactical organization. But he did not have time, just then, to complete his final solution of the militia problem.

The fact is that the Baron had been a very busy man during the week ending April 21, 1783. The whole headquarters was absorbed in the problem of demobilizing the army. This is a delicate business under any circumstances and especially with an army that is on the verge of mutiny because there is no money to pay off its officers and men. This situation impinged sufficiently on the Baron's ostensible job as Inspector General. It also put an overload on the General Staff in

which Steuben was serving in a sextuple capacity as chief of the whole and chief of each of the five G's.[1] These routine duties had already been complicated by preparations for a little tour of special duty in which the Baron was to go to Canada to take over the frontier posts from General Haldiman of the British Army. Steuben was also engaged, *in addition to his other duties*, in writing a memoir on Military Academies and Manufacturies for the Secretary of War. And now we find that even at Washington's Headquarters, just when the Staff was "up to its ears," the "old man" called for a report on "A Peace Establishment" for a newborn republic. And it will be noted that in his call for this report, the Commander-in-Chief did not omit the customary phrase, "as soon as possible."

If the Baron left some of the details of the national militia problem unsolved when he complied with this order just one week later, every modern General Staff officer will be disposed to treat him with sympathetic indulgence. We shall see that he made the fullest amends later. Perhaps Washington was thinking of staff officers in general and of Baron Steuben in particular, when on a later occasion he wrote:

> My observation on every employment of life is, that wherever and whenever one person is found adequate to the discharge of a duty by close application thereto, it is worse executed by two persons, and scarcely done at all if three or more are employed therein.[2]

[1] In the terms of our modern nomenclature, Washington's General Staff was organized as follows:
Chief of the General Staff: Major General Baron von Steuben.
Asst. Chief of Staff, G-1 (Personnel): Major General von Steuben.
Asst. Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence): Major General von Steuben.
Asst. Chief of Staff, G-3 (Operations): Major General von Steuben.
Asst. Chief of Staff, G-4 (Supply): Major General von Steuben.
Asst. Chief of Staff, G-5 (Training): Major General von Steuben.
It will be seen from the above "roster" that while Washington's General Staff was not a numerous body, each of its subdivisions was headed by a highly trained General Staff officer. What it lacked in numbers was well offset in quality. It is probably the only General Staff Corps in history that can be rated as "100 % efficient" throughout.

[2] This passage is to be found in a letter from President Washington to the Secretary of War, dated September 24, 1794.

3

During the following year, Baron Steuben devoted himself to an exhaustive study of the best defence organization for the United States. Nor was this an unfamiliar subject. The "Steuben Manuscripts," in the Library of the New York Historical Society, show that he had devoted years to the scientific study of the military institutions most suitable for a modern republic. Among these manuscripts is one in French, with an English translation, entitled *Réponse aux Questions sur la Milice des Suisses*. The French copy of this paper bears the following endorsement:

Committee of Correspondence,
Paris, July 6, 1778.

GENTLEMEN:

I send you the best account I have been able to procure of the establishment of the Militia in Switzerland, and have the honor to be,

With the greatest respect,
Yr. most obed't Servt.
ARTHUR LEE[1].

This paper gives a detailed account of the organization and training of the militia of the Swiss Canton of Berne.[2] The date of Lee's endorsement shows that this document did not leave Paris until more than nine months after Steuben sailed for America. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the paper was either written by Steuben or that this particular French version was annotated by him before he left Paris. Among the footnotes are two that could only have been written by a trained officer intimately acquainted with the Prussian system of combined maneuvers—then little known outside of Prussia. One of these footnotes also indi-

[1]Arthur Lee, at that time, was associated with Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane as one of the American Commissioners in Paris.

[2]A uniform federal militia had not yet been formed in Switzerland at that time. As we shall see, Steuben proposed it for the new American Republic before it was established in Switzerland.

cates that its writer was then considering the extent to which Prussian military methods could be adapted in a citizen army. That this writer could have been any other than Steuben is therefore highly improbable. My guess is that Steuben annotated the original of this document while he was in communication with the American Commissioners in Paris in 1777; that he found it later in the American War Office, probably when he was on duty there in the winter of 1779–1780 as Washington's representative in matters relating to the pending reorganization of the Continental Army; that then or later he borrowed it for use in connection with his further study of the national militia problem; and that after using it he neglected to return it.

In the same volume of the "Steuben Papers" is another unsigned and undated document entitled "Thoughts on the Establishment of a National Militia." Among the opening paragraphs of this paper is the following:

> As I have a mind to give some ideas on the formation and discipline of the militia of a free nation, I think the following regulations may help in the attainment of that perfection so necessary in such an establishment, for the good and security of the state.

This paper is based on the *Réponse aux Questions* and is a rather literal and crude adaptation of Bernese methods of organization. References to the Continental Army indicate that it was written after Steuben came to America, but long before he reached his final solution. The paper is principally interesting as a step in the gradual evolution of the Baron's ideas. According to this paper, the militia should be classified according to ages with compulsory training for the men in each class.

4

Steuben completed his final solution of the militia problem early in 1784 and submitted it to Washington, who was then in retirement at Mount Vernon. In a letter to the Baron dated March 15, 1784, Washington says:

I have perused, with attention, the plan which you have formed for establishing a Continental Legion, and for training a certain part of the arms-bearing men of the Union, as a militia in times of peace; and with the small alterations which have been suggested and made, I very much approve of it. It was no unpleasing and flattering circumstance to me to find such a coincidence of ideas as appears to run through your plan and the one I had the honor to lay before a committee of Congress in May last.[1] Mine, however, was a hasty production, the consequence of a sudden call and little time for arrangement; yours of mature thought and better digestion. At the same time that I limited the propriety of a Continental Militia, I glided almost insensibly into what I thought *would*, rather than what I conceived *ought* to be, a proper peace establishment for this country.[2]

A peace establishment ought always to have two objects in view: the one, present security of posts and stores, and the public tranquillity; the other, to be prepared, if the latter is impracticable, to resist with efficacy the sudden attempts of a foreign or domestic enemy. If we have no occasion for troops for the first purpose, and were certain of not wanting any for the second, then all expenses, of every nature and kind whatsoever on this score, would be equally nugatory and unjustifiable; but while men have a disposition to wrangle, and disturb the peace of society, either from ambitious political or interested motives, common prudence and foresight require such an establishment as is likely to insure us the blessings of peace, although the undertaking should be attended with difficulty and expense; and I can think of no plan more likely to answer the purpose, than the one you have suggested, which, the principles being established, may be enlarged or diminished. at pleasure, according to circumstances. It therefore

[1]Here, of course, Washington refers to the "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" which he submitted to Alexander Hamilton's Committee, May 1, 1783, and which we have considered in the foregoing chapters.

[2]Here Washington refers to the fact that in his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" he had expressed a preference for special training companies in the general body of the militia rather than a separate Continental establishment. In this letter to Steuben he makes it clear that that preference was based purely on political expediency. See Chapter V.

meets my approbation, and has my best wishes for its success.[1]

It will be recalled that in his own plan referred to in the above letter, Washington had pointed out that our national security should rest upon a well-regulated militia. He had definitely referred to the military organization of Switzerland as the model for a modern republic. He had shown that the existing militia organization was defective because it attempted to embody every man from the age of eighteen to the age of fifty. By a "well-regulated militia" he meant a relatively small fraction of the younger men actually organized, armed, and trained. He had suggested several feasible means of accomplishing this object, but did not commit himself positively to any one of them.

5

In his final plan[2] Baron Steuben, as a trained general staff officer, attacked this specific problem and solved it in a most rational and scientific manner. He pointed out that the total enrolled strength of the militia, in the year 1784, was more than 400,000. Any effective plan to arm and train such a number would involve prohibitive expense and would be an intolerable social and industrial burden. On the other hand, no possible emergency could demand so large a force. It was therefore absurd to maintain such an establishment.

[1]This letter is given in full in Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, volume IX, page 25. It is unfortunate that General Upton, in making his numerous citations from Sparks, should have overlooked this significant letter. At the end of its first paragraph, it should have referred him again to Washington's constructive contribution on the *Military Policy of the United States*.

[2]This plan was published by Baron Steuben later in the year under the title "A Letter on the Subject of an Established Militia, etc., addressed to the Inhabitants of the United States." The title page of the pamphlet bears the date, 1784. The month and day of publication are not given, but as the text refers to an Act of Congress passed June 3, 1784, it must have been printed after that date and therefore includes the revisions referred to by Washington in his letter of March 15th. There is a copy of this pamphlet in the Library of Congress, another in the Library of the New York Historical Society, and another in the library of Harvard College.

He then estimated the numbers that might be required and concluded that a peace force of 21,000 men, expansible to 42,000 on mobilization, would be sufficient for the defence of the United States at that time. As he needed only 21,000 men out of a total militia strength of 400,000, his "active fraction" would be a small one—much smaller than the active fraction required in Switzerland. If he had to embody every third man as the Swiss then did, it would be necessary to resort to compulsion. But as he needed only every twentieth man, he proposed that the ranks be filled by enlisting volunteers for three years. He proposed to pay these young men a small bounty, to arm and clothe them at public expense, and to call them into training camps for thirty-one days each year. From the standpoint of economy, he showed that adequate training for this small fraction would cost much less in money and in industrial burden than the totally inadequate training then demanded of the whole militia.

It will be observed that Steuben's Continental Militia was, in effect, a modification of the Swiss system as adapted to a country where compulsory service was unnecessary because sufficient numbers could be obtained by voluntary enlistment. It will also be observed that it is identical functionally and structurally with our present National Guard as it has been reorganized since the World War. The only essential difference is in the mode of training. Our present National Guard relies largely upon "armory training" distributed throughout the year. Steuben proposed thirty-one days in training camps[1] each summer.

6

One of the advanced ideas that Steuben had gotten from Frederick the Great was the importance of combined training in order to assure the intelligent team-work of infantry,

[1]Here Steuben also anticipated our "Citizens' Military Training Camps" by more than a century. It will be noted, however, that the Baron's training camps were to be directly connected with his Continental Militia or National Guard instead of being left entirely "in the air" as ours are to-day.

cavalry, and field artillery. The full importance of this was but little understood outside of Prussia at that time. Steuben sought to secure this advantage for his American National Guard. In order to accomplish this in a sparsely settled country of great area, it was necessary to divide his total force into small training teams. If he should make his training team a "division" of 7,000 men, he would have only three teams in all, and each of them would occupy approximately a third of the whole national area. With so large an area and with the communications then available it would be impossible to assemble such divisions for team training. Steuben therefore invented a smaller team with a strength of 3,000 men which he called a legion. This gave him seven training teams, each billeted in a much smaller area. Each of his legions was to comprise two small brigades of infantry, with a squadron of two troops of cavalry, a battalion of artillery of two batteries, and an organized field train. Indeed by this arrangement, each brigade supported by a troop and a battery preserved his team proportions and gave him fourteen territorial teams[1] for training purposes.

A territorial military organization based upon the distribution of population in such a manner as to facilitate nation-wide military training, localized military units, and decentralized mobilization has many obvious advantages. Here Steuben appears to be a real pioneer, for this system was not perfected even in Europe until long after his day. It was not adopted in our own peace establishment until

[1]In a later form of the legion adopted by Washington in 1792, it was subdivided into four sub-legions, each with a regiment of infantry, a battery, and a troop of cavalry. With this modification, Steuben would have been able to divide the national territory into twenty-eight training areas for combined tactical training.

General Upton refers to an excerpt from Steuben's pamphlet which he found quoted in a later document known as the "Knox Plan" of 1790, published in the *American State Papers*. In this reference General Upton does not hesitate to ridicule Steuben's legion. If he had examined Steuben's whole pamphlet and Washington's "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," to which the pamphlet was really a supplement, he might have found Steuben's tactical invention less amusing. (See Upton's *Military Policy of the United States*, page 82.)

after the World War, one hundred and thirty-six years after the Baron first proposed it.

For purposes of inspection, supervision, and decentralized administration, Steuben also proposed to divide the country into three territorial departments as follows:

The Northern department comprising New England. (To this area he allotted two of his militia legions.)

The Middle department comprising New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. (To this area he allotted three of his militia legions.)

The Southern department comprising Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. (To this area he allotted two of his militia legions.)

As each of these departments was also to include a munitions service and a system of popular military education, they must be recognized at once as the forerunners of our present corps areas. Here again Steuben anticipated our present organization by one hundred and thirty-six years.

It should also be understood that if Steuben's plan had been adopted, the military schools proposed by him must have trained and developed an effective general staff from the beginning of our national history. It might not have been called a "General Staff," but it must have performed the general staff function. Steuben was a general staff officer, trained in general staff methods and imbued with sound general staff doctrine. It was the purpose of a military academy, as he and Washington conceived it, to transmit, diffuse, and perpetuate those methods and that doctrine in the American citizen army. If Steuben had been permitted to supervise the establishment of these schools, we may be sure that he would also have transmitted the method of instruction which he had received from Frederick the Great. Thus, the "applicatory method" both as a means of training and as a "tactical measuring rod" must have been adopted in our service more than a century before it finally crept into the curriculum at Fort Leavenworth.

Steuben also proposed a small regular army to garrison the posts on the Indian frontier. Washington's plan of 1783 contained the same proposal. But neither Steuben nor Washington advocated a standing army for purposes of national defence. They proposed a strictly limited number of professional soldiers to perform certain continuing duties that cannot be performed by citizen soldiers. In addition to this small specialized regular army, the plan also contemplated a limited number of highly trained professionals to provide for military instruction and administration in time of peace. Steuben's own history proves that professional guidance is essential to the efficiency of a citizen army—but in terms of quality rather than quantity.

7

Steuben's plan of 1784, together with his proposals on military education submitted the year before, constitute a complete national defence system. As he had perfected the organization and discipline of the citizen army which won our independence, so now he sought to perpetuate that institution for the future. If our fathers had adopted the plan which he outlined, we should have been prepared for every subsequent military emergency from the War of 1812 to the Civil War and the World War. And strange to say, Steuben's plan was prophetic of the present military organization which we have finally attained after more than a century of costly, painful, and spasmodic evolution. Everything that is meritorious in our new military organization since the World War was contained in a simpler and more economical form in Steuben's original plan. But our existing military organization is burdened and disfigured by many expensive, cumbersome, and unnecessary excrescences which had no place in Baron Steuben's original plan.

Steuben's Continental Militia was a military organization of the Swiss type. But it was not the result of blind imitation. As a scientific military expert, the Baron was studying the military needs of a "free nation." As an experienced Prussian veteran he was familiar with every detail of the standing

army system as it then existed in Europe. This he recognized as an essentially monarchical institution that could have no congenial place in the new American republic. In his quest for a more appropriate form, it was natural that he should turn to Switzerland for a modern embodiment of that ancient Teutonic war host of freemen which had long ceased to exist in every other part of Europe. He arrived at a solution similar to that of Switzerland, not by imitation, but because the Swiss military system is the characteristic military organization for a democracy. No candid and competent mind seeking effective military organization in terms of modern democracy can arrive at any other solution. The British Territorial Force is a case in point. When Lord Haldane advocated its establishment he was actually, though no doubt unconsciously, advocating a voluntary service adaptation of the Swiss Military System identical in type with Steuben's Continental Militia and with the American National Guard. But he advocated it because it was adapted to the military needs of modern British democracy and not because other democracies had found similar solutions for the same problem. It is significant, however, that Baron Steuben and Lord Haldane, both profound students of German military efficiency, should arrive at the same means of translating that efficiency into terms of Anglo-Saxon democracy.

CHAPTER VIII

THE KNOX PLAN OF 1786

I

Soon after the demobilization of the Continental Army, Baron Steuben was discharged from his office as Inspector General. This left him in poverty and without any financial resources. When he reported to Congress in February, 1778, there was an implied contract that in the event of final victory, he would be indemnified for his sacrifices in leaving Germany. His claim under this contract and for reimbursement for expenses incurred in the public service now amounted to more than $62,000.

The Continental Congress was unable to pay this claim. Indeed, when it was under consideration, the very existence of the contract was denied. Finally, in 1790, after Washington became President, the Baron was granted a pension of $2500 per year. But for six years he lived in poverty and was largely dependent upon the hospitality and charity of his many devoted friends.

About a year after his discharge from the army, Steuben became a candidate for the office of Secretary of War under the Continental Congress. This office had been vacant since General Lincoln's resignation in November, 1783. No one could be more competent than Steuben to fill it and the salary of $2450 per year offered him much needed relief. But his friend and comrade, General Henry Knox, also sought the office. As Knox was involved in extensive land speculations he also needed the money. With strong political backing in his native state, Massachusetts, he was finally selected for the office.

This was a keen disappointment to Baron Steuben, particularly as the opposition, with or without Knox's consent, opposed his selection because he was a foreigner. While still

suffering under the sting of this ungenerous reproach, the Baron relieved his feelings, in a letter to a friend, as follows:

> The man who had abandoned all his appointments in Europe to devote his services to the United States, who had served them with zeal and fidelity during a war of seven years as critical as trying; the man who had got possessions in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey[1]—with what effrontery could he be called a foreigner! As to the importance of this ministerial office, the man who had organized the whole American Army in the midst of the war; the man who solely had established and put in execution the principles of strict military rules; this man cannot be entrusted with the administration of a corps of four hundred men in time of peace! What fine reasoning! But, in fact, Mr. Knox had engaged the delegates of Massachusetts to secure to him this place. His own State could not provide him with a post worthy of his ambition, and therefore the Confederation had to give him a suitable appointment. Without disputing his knowledge of the artillery, I dare to assert, that on my arrival at the army, it had no idea of maneuvering with a single field piece, and that I was the first who taught them to make use of their cannons in the attack and retreat.[2]

It must have been a comfort to the Baron "to get that out of his system." But the incident marks only a temporary coolness in his friendship with Knox. Steuben had a hasty temper but he was not a man of enduring resentments.

2

Knox found a difficult task confronting him as Secretary of War. The Indians on the frontier, to use Washington's expressive language, were "jealous and soured," and with a regular army of only eighty men, Knox had no effective means of dealing with them. For the past year the govern-

[1]Each of these States had given Baron Steuben grants of land in recognition of his services in the common cause. They were "possessions," but were tracts of wild land in the wilderness. He had no capital to develop them. They therefore added to his poverty by making him "land-poor." Steuben was a citizen of Pennsylvania by special act of the Assembly of that Commonwealth.

[2]From Kapp's *Life of Steuben*, p. 526.

ment had attempted to garrison the posts on the northwest frontier with drafts from the militia. For this purpose, Congress had authorized not to exceed seven hundred men by successive short-term details from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. But if short-term militia drafts had been poor substitutes for Continental troops during the Revolutionary War they were even more unsuited for constabulary duty in the Indian country.

Shortly after his appointment, Knox got Congress to authorize him to enlist men for three years to fill his frontier army of 700 men. From the congressional standpoint this was purely an economy measure. It was much cheaper. To maintain 700 militia by short-term drafts required the payment of nearly as many more men marching out to take station or marching home for discharge. There were great incidental advantages in Knox's plan. Permanent soldiers, by long service on the frontier, could become familiar with the country and would therefore be more effective for constabulary duty. Knox, like Washington, was always a strong advocate of militia, but like Washington he recognized that there are certain special tasks that cannot be performed by citizen soldiers in time of peace. For these duties, and for these duties only, he recognized a need for a permanently embodied regular force.

3

But the most important work performed by General Knox during his term of office was the preparation of a general scheme of national defence. In March, 1786, pursuant to instructions from Congress he completed a "Plan for the General Arrangement of the Militia of the United States."[1]

In his plan of 1786, Knox retained all of the essential features of the military system proposed by Steuben in 1784. He retained Steuben's legion as the basis of his tactical organization with the same conception of territorial distribution according to population. He had also endorsed Steuben's plan for three military academies. But his plan differed

[1]A copy of this plan, as published in a contemporary pamphlet, may be seen in the Library of Congress.

from Steuben's, in that Knox proposed to retain the general organization of the whole militia. He also proposed military training for *all* able-bodied young men instead of for a limited number of volunteers.

It will be recalled that in Washington's letter to Steuben, he had suggested that there is a difference between what we *ought* to have and what is feasible from a political standpoint. Knox was a successful practical politician and seems to have been influenced by the same consideration. No doubt he would have been glad to have a purely voluntary National Guard of 21,000 young men such as Steuben proposed. But he evidently felt that such a proposal would encounter serious political opposition. The Baron was no doubt correct in his opinion that it was unnecessary and indeed absurd to attempt effective military organization and training for the whole national man power. He therefore frankly proposed to abandon the general militia organization for national purposes and to replace it entirely by a small fraction of the younger men. This force properly organized and equipped and with specially trained officers would be a potential Continental Army, always embodied and ready for speedy mobilization.

But a proposal to abolish the general militia organization involved serious political difficulties. It was an existing organization and in most of the states had grown in strength and importance since the passage of the Act of 1775. Its officers comprised most of the political leaders in each community. Many of them held high rank. All of them were proud of their handsome uniforms and took their own military pretensions seriously. For example, if Steuben's plan had been adopted there would have been one militia legion and one additional brigade in Knox's own state, Massachusetts. This would have called for one major general and three brigadier generals in the new organization. But there were already at least six[1] (and probably more) militia divisions in that state

[1] I have been unable to ascertain the precise number of militia divisions in Massachusetts in 1786. But four years later, it appears from an official return, there were nine militia divisions with nine major generals and nineteen brigadiers in that state.

each commanded by a major general who took himself as seriously as military gentlemen of that exalted rank generally do. As a military expert, General Knox no doubt realized that a good deal of water could be squeezed out of that organization without hurting it materially. But as a practical politician, he saw the practical difficulty of determining just where the squeezing process should be applied. It would be necessary for five of these military heroes to relinquish the path of glory to one of their own number. It is hardly likely that they would be able to agree among themselves as to how this arrangement should be made. And it is no more likely that the governor or the legislature would be disposed to stir up so explosive a mixture. In short, there was a powerful vested interest that would certainly oppose Steuben's solution. General Knox therefore sought to obtain substantially the same result in a less objectionable way.

He found this, among other advantages, in his proposal to divide the militia into three classes according to age. His first class, to be composed of the young men over eighteen and under twenty-one years, he called the "advanced corps." His second class, to be composed of men over twenty and under forty-six, he called the "main corps." His third class, composed of men over forty-five and under sixty, he called the "reserved corps."

Knox proposed to put his "advanced corps" in training camps for six weeks each year. After three years, the graduates of the "advanced corps" would pass into the "main corps," and thence later into the "reserved corps." By this arrangement all training could be concentrated on the younger men. Eventually all of the organized militia would be composed of men who had graduated from the "advanced corps." His "advanced corps" would be similar to Steuben's voluntary National Guard but instead of being separate from the general body of the militia it would form a highly important part of it.

Now let us consider the political aspect of this scheme in Massachusetts. Under the Knox Plan, the allotment to that state would be one whole legion and one half legion in the "advanced corps," eleven legions in the "main corps," and

four legions in the "reserved corps." This would still call for only one major general and three brigadier generals in the "advanced corps." But it would require eleven major generals and twenty-two brigadiers in the "main corps," and four and eight respectively in the "reserved corps." This presented a much more attractive political prospect. Instead of squeezing six major generals into one, Knox would expand six major generals into sixteen—which is always a much more popular process.

No doubt Knox realized that eventually his organization would reach the same result that Steuben sought. His "advanced corps" would eventually become the only important element of the militia. In due time the absurdity of maintaining any soldiers over thirty years old in the "main corps" would become manifest. Knox probably sought as Steuben did to choke out the old militia organization, but he proposed to do it in a more popular and agreeable manner. Instead of squeezing out all the water at once he would let it ooze out gradually. Instead of amputating surplus major generals he would let them slough off gradually. Or to mix our metaphors still further, Knox realized that for catching flies, vinegar is never so effective as molasses.

4

In emphasizing the political contrast between the Steuben plan of 1784 and the Knox Plan of 1786, there is no intention to depreciate an important feature of the latter; that is, the general obligation of all citizens to serve in the national defence. In proposing universal training, General Knox asserted a great ideal which had always been embodied in the ancient militia institution. But universal military training in time of peace was not essential to effective defence in 1786 any more than it is to-day. It is quite likely that General Knox, in proposing the ideal solution, would have been quite content if it had been adopted with voluntary training only in his "advanced corps."

Knox estimated the total militia strength in 1786 as 450,000. He calculated that this would give the "advanced corps" a

strength of 45,000,[1] with 292,500 in the "main corps," and 112,500 in the "reserved corps." This is a most imposing force. But in computing its cost Knox only considered the cost of the "advanced corps"—as all training would be concentrated on the youngsters in that force. He estimated that each legion of the "advanced corps" would cost about $49,000 per year and that the total annual cost for the whole establishment would be about $750,000. If this amount seems astonishingly small, the reader should consider the value of money in 1786. The pay of the regular army, as established by the Act of 1785, was very low. The senior officer, a lieutenant colonel, received $50 per month. The monthly pay of captains was $35. Sergeants received $6, corporals $5, and privates $4 per month.

Much of Knox's pamphlet is devoted to peculiar methods of financing that then seemed necessary under the bankrupt government of the Confederation. He proposed that all persons exempted from militia duty should pay an exemption tax,[2] and that the members of the "main" and "reserved corps" should pay a smaller amount. It was largely from the proceeds of these levies that he proposed to maintain the "annual camps of discipline" for the younger men under training.

A most interesting feature of the Knox Plan had to do with the practical training of officers. The officers on duty with the "advanced corps" in the summer camps were to be detailed from the "main corps." By this means the training camps would become special schools of practical instruction for militia officers of all grades. Here Knox anticipated one of the most important features of the modern Swiss system. In Switzerland, the annual recruit training schools are officered by aspirants for promotion. Before a Swiss officer can be advanced to a higher grade in the general body of the

[1] In his original calculation Knox did not make a sufficient allowance for exemptions on account of disability and for other causes. In the modification of his plan which he made for President Washington in 1790, he estimated the strength of the "advanced corps" as 32,500.

[2] Under a system based upon the obligation of universal military service, this is a perfectly legitimate tax. An exemption tax of this nature is now in force in Switzerland and is one of the means of supporting the Swiss Army.

militia, he must demonstrate his capacity for it by successfully commanding and instructing an appropriate unit in the recruit course. This suggests that the best as well as the most economical means of providing instructors for our present citizen training camps would be through the detail of selected officers and non-commissioned officers from the National Guard. Under such a system the training camps would be schools of application for officers as well as recruit schools for beginners. Washington, Steuben, and Knox would be amazed to learn that we find it necessary to maintain an expensive standing army in order to train the very citizen army which they designed in order to make a standing army unnecessary.

5

It was General Knox's final estimate that his "advanced corps" would number about 32,500. In the event of any serious emergency, this whole force would be called into service. It would then mobilize immediately as a Continental Army, completely organized in effective tactical divisions.[1] But the most remarkable feature of the Knox Plan was his machinery for drawing small expeditionary forces from the militia when needed. In this way Knox proposed to dispense entirely with a professional regular army. In 1783, Washington had proposed to organize the militia so that a relatively large Continental Army could be drawn from it in the event of war. Knox now proposed to extend this principle to the small forces required for the frontier constabulary and to such additional forces as might be needed in the event of an Indian war.

According to my estimate, Knox would have about 3600 company units[2] of infantry, cavalry, and artillery in his "ad-

[1]The legions proposed by Steuben and Knox were small divisions each with its proper proportions of infantry, cavalry, and artillery.

[2]Knox estimated that there would be 337,500 men in his "advanced corps" and "main corps." As he proposed 72 men per company this would give about 4700 local company units. But as Knox did not make a sufficient allowance for exemptions or for conditions in the more sparsely settled regions, I have assumed only 3600 local companies instead of 4700.

vanced corps" and "main corps." He proposed to make each one of these local companies a depot for its proper quota in any small army or expeditionary force which might be needed. For example, suppose an Indian war should require a small army of about six thousand enlisted men. A levy of only two men from each local militia company would give 7200 non-commissioned officers and privates. This would be enough enlisted men for two complete legions with a surplus of 1440 men for replacements and auxiliary duties on the line of communications.

In making such a call, the Secretary of War would call on each state for its proper quota of officers and men. The governor of each state would then subdivide this quota among the several local militia legions in his state. Each legion commander would then transmit it through regimental and battalion commanders down to the companies. In the last analysis, each company commander would be required to procure two competent soldiers from his company. These two men, fully armed and equipped and obligated to serve for three years, unless sooner discharged, would thus form the company quota.

Knox expected that, as a rule, there would be two adventurous young men in each company who would be willing to go. If so, well and good. But if not, the captain would be required to fill the quota by *drafting* one or both of the men by lot or other equitable means. The men thus selected would proceed to the rendezvous under military control. The company details would assemble at battalion headquarters. Thence the consolidated battalion quotas of eight men would proceed to regimental headquarters. At legionary headquarters the four infantry regimental quotas would be joined by the men from the cavalry and artillery—thus completing the legionary quota. At each headquarters the designated officers would also join the detachments until eventually at the expeditionary rendezvous the force would be assembled under the general officer designated to command.

The whole process of mobilization and concentration would be systematic and expeditious because the men would arrive

at the successive rendezvous in disciplined bodies under trained officers. All of the infantrymen would arrive fully armed and equipped. The cavalrymen would arrive armed, equipped, and mounted. The artillerists would arrive with full personal equipment, prepared to man the artillery equipment assembled at the rendezvous for that purpose.

Such a force would soon be ready for the field. And Steuben's legionary organization would be well adapted to the conditions of that day. Each legion would comprise two small infantry brigades of two regiments each, a cavalry squadron of two troops, and an artillery battalion of two batteries. Furthermore, under Steuben's training system, the officers and men of the three arms would be accustomed to joint maneuvers.

Upon the completion of the campaign the demobilization would be as systematic as the assembly. Under disciplined control, the men would finally return to their homes with a broadened view of their country and particularly of the great Western frontier. After a term of such active service the men would be entitled to graduated exemptions from further militia duty. But many men would return to the militia better qualified to become officers. It will be recalled that George Washington began his public life in similar military expeditions to the frontier. This was an essential part of his education for greater things. General Knox would have made this a characteristic feature of American life.

It was in order to make this plan more effective that General Knox proposed to form all of his militia companies into six sections of twelve men each. These sections as he proposed them had no tactical significance. They were simply convenient groups for purposes of drawing men for active service in the army. If six men were to be drafted from each company one man would be taken from each section. If three, one man would be taken from each group of two adjoining sections. Knox considered that the section would further the principle of localization, especially in sparsely settled regions. If one man should be called from a section and there should be no volunteer, the adjustment might be made among the section members. Eleven of them might

induce the twelfth man to go; possibly by a money consideration or possibly by undertaking to provide for his dependents. Or there might be two volunteers in one section and none in its neighbor. This permitted another friendly adjustment. The draft remained in the background as a final resort, but it was expected that, with its prospective application in these small groups of neighbors, it would rarely be necessary.

The proposed plan offered a means of forming respectable expeditionary forces promptly, economically, and systematically. One man called from each section would yield an army of 21,600 men even in Knox's day. If this system had been in force in 1846, a draft of one man from each group of three sections would have yielded a well-organized, well-equipped, and well-officered army of 43,000 men for the War with Mexico.[1]

[1]The same method of providing for a temporary reënforcement for the regular army would be perfectly feasible to-day. A voluntary quota of one thousand officers and men from each infantry division of the National Guard and half that number from each Reserve Infantry Division would yield a force of 31,500 officers and men —all of them stimulated with the pride of voluntary service and all of them more or less accustomed to military life. Such an arrangement would be of great educational value to the citizen army. Upon their return from the expedition, these men would add greatly to the sum of military experience in their home organizations.

CHAPTER IX

PRESIDENT WASHINGTON

I

No action was taken on the Knox Plan of 1786. The Government under the Confederation was still insolvent and still incapable of any constructive action. It was largely to mend this weakness and particularly to provide effective measures for the common defence that men like Washington sought to establish a more effective union.

On the 21st of February, 1787, Congress called for a national convention to meet at Philadelphia on the 2nd of May to consider the revision of the Articles of Confederation. The delegates began to assemble on the designated day, but it was not until twenty-three days later that a quorum was present. Washington was then elected presiding officer. Early in its proceedings the convention decided to exceed its instructions and to prepare a new federal constitution. After prolonged debate and after many compromises, the instrument was finally completed. On the 17th of September Washington transmitted the new Constitution to the Continental Congress.

Few of the members of the convention were satisfied with the proposed new government. Some considered it too strong and some considered it too weak. George Mason, Elbridge Gerry, and Edmund Randolph refused to sign the instrument. Washington was not enthusiastic about it, but considered it the best bond of union that could be obtained. Benjamin Franklin was not satisfied, but in an eloquent speech he urged his fellow members to join him in signing it. Alexander Hamilton, in the convention, had proposed another type of government—in effect, a highly centralized

elective monarchy. But that being impossible of attainment, he strongly advocated the adoption of the new Constitution as the only practical safeguard against impending anarchy.

The first Congress under the new government was to assemble in New York March 4, 1789. Some members were present on that date, but it was not until the first of April that a quorum of the House was present. On April 6th, a quorum of the Senate having arrived, the electoral votes were counted and George Washington was proclaimed President of the United States. On the 30th of April he took the oath of office and made his first Inaugural Address.

The First Session of the First Congress was busy with the provision of a temporary revenue measure, the organization of the new government, and the preparation of proposed amendments to the Constitution. Alexander Hamilton became Secretary of the Treasury on September 11th. General Knox, Secretary of War under the old Government, was confirmed under the new government on September 12th. Edmund Randolph was confirmed as Attorney General on September 26th. The office of Secretary of State was tendered to Thomas Jefferson, Minister to France, who was then on leave of absence in America. On September 29th the new government took over the military establishment which the Confederation had maintained on the Indian frontier. The same day, Congress adjourned to reconvene the following January.

2

The political history of the United States, under the Constitution, really begins with the convening of the second session of the First Congress in January, 1790. The constructive programme of the new administration comprised two primary objectives: the establishment of a sound financial system and the provision of effective measures for the national defence. That this twofold national programme was fully recognized at the time is indicated by extracts from two letters written by competent first-hand witnesses soon after Congress convened. On the 24th of January, James Madison,

one of the Representatives from Virginia, wrote the political news to Thomas Jefferson. In this letter Madison said:

> The business of Congress is as yet merely in embryo. The principal subjects before them are the plans of revenue and the militia.

A letter from Oliver Wolcott, dated January 28, 1790, contains the following:

> This much I will venture a conjecture upon, that the efficiency of this government will essentially depend upon the system of their finances, and the regulation of their militia, both of which therefore, I suppose, they will extend as far as the principles of the Constitution will permit, and consequently endeavor to include ultimately the state debts in the system, and render the militia as dependent as the case will admit, upon the general executive. . . .

In Washington's eyes these two fundamental problems were of equal importance to the future prosperity and happiness of the American people under the new Government. But his personal attention was given to the military problem rather than to the finances. As he had full confidence in his selected financial agent, Alexander Hamilton, he was able to leave the development of his fiscal programme to him. But he assumed personal supervision of the arrangements for national defence.

The success of the financial half of Washington's political system was so great and so immediate that its history is well known. The reasons for the failure of the military half of his system are not so well known. And yet the failure of the one has influenced our subsequent history quite as much as has the success of the other. Indeed it is the highest tribute to the Federalist financial system that it was strong enough to endure the strains caused by the failure of the Federalist military system. Most of the financial burdens borne by the American people in their subsequent history have been due to the fact that our fathers accepted only one half of Washington's political system. We are paying our income tax today and are bearing a stupendous national debt because our

fathers rejected Washington's military system at the very time that they adopted his financial programme.[1] We are bearing the pains of Coolidge-economy because our fathers rejected Washington-economy.

3

Washington entered office convinced that the provision for "the common defence" so strongly emphasized by the preamble to the Constitution was one of the most important tasks intrusted to him. He approached this task with confidence because, as we have seen in the foregoing chapters of this book, he had prepared a scientific solution, based upon life-long experience, and had perfected it with the collaboration of Baron Steuben and his other generals. He was ready to present this solution to Congress, and an examination of his official speeches and private writings reveals that the way for such a presentation was carefully prepared and timed.

In his Inaugural Address on April 30, 1789, there had been no specific recommendations, but his language indicates

[1]This idea was fully developed by Hon. John W. Weeks, Secretary of War, in a statement before the Senate Appropriations Committee, April 25, 1922. In opening his statement Mr. Weeks said:

"If an economist should analyze the operations of the American Government since its foundation, he would find that most of its wasteful expenditure and most of its burden of debt have been due to unbusinesslike methods in the conduct of its military establishment. We have entered each war with our national defence system unorganized. This has required an extemporized organization thrown together in great haste resulting always in excessive expenditure and excessive economic disturbance. In each war we have consistently adhered to the policy of forming a citizen army to reënforce our small regular establishment, but in the absence of any definite plans the process of forming this citizen army has been one of confusion, disorder, delay and extravagance."

It has recently been computed by Mr. Harvey E. Fisk of the Bankers Trust Company of New York that the total national expenditure from 1789 to 1927 is more than ninety-one billion dollars. Of this amount nearly 65 per cent., or over fifty-nine billion dollars, is chargeable directly or indirectly to military and naval items. As President Washington had proposed effective and economical preparedness for every subsequent national emergency from the War of 1812 to the World War, it is obvious that most of our actual military expenditure has been an unnecessary waste chargeable to the failure of his military programme.

that he had pondered deeply on the world significance of the new American Republic. In this connection he used the following prophetic words:

> The preservation of the Sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican form of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American People.

That there were military implications in this trust was to be discovered by two of his successors. When Abraham Lincoln penetrated the inner secret of the great sacrifice at Gettysburg, he saw that these men had died that government *by* and *for* the people should not perish from the earth. When Woodrow Wilson finally led us into the World War he saw that America must fight to make the whole world safe for democracy. Indeed even as Washington delivered his Inaugural Address, the great American experiment had already spread beyond the American Continent. Five days later the States-General of France assembled at Versailles. The long world struggle between democracy and autocracy had begun.

In a message to Congress, on August 7, 1789, Washington made his first formal recommendation upon national defence. After referring to the necessity for posts along the Indian frontier, he said:

> Along with this object I am induced to suggest another, with the national importance and necessity of which I am deeply impressed; I mean some uniform and effective system for the militia of the United States. It is unnecessary to offer arguments in recommendation of a measure on which the honor, safety and well being of our country so evidently and so essentially depend; but it may not be amiss to observe that *I am particularly anxious it should receive as early attention as circumstances will admit, because it is now in our power to avail ourselves of the military knowledge disseminated throughout the several states by means of the many well-instructed officers and soldiers of the late Army, a resource which is daily diminishing by death and other causes. To suffer this peculiar advantage to pass away unimproved would be to neglect an opportunity which will*

never again occur, unless, unfortunately, we should again be involved in a long and arduous war.[1]

4

As the time for the Second Session of Congress approached, Washington gave close study to the demands of national defence. In thus considering the problem of military institutions at a time when there was no military emergency, he placed the whole subject on a highly philosophic plane. Indeed, it would appear from his writings that he had anticipated the Clausewitzian dictum that *war is merely a special phase of political action.* From this flows the inevitable corollary that every complete political system must include in it those special institutions upon which it must rely when political action tends to assume the special violent form known as war.

President Washington was engaged in creating a new republican political system. He therefore studied republican defensive institutions as indispensable and integral parts of his political system. He also believed that the provision of appropriate military institutions would check the tendency of political action to enter upon its abnormal violent phase. He therefore sought much more than the security of our soil. He sought to build his military system in terms consistent with the world policy of a peace-seeking, peace-furthering republic.

This idea assumed its final form in the Farewell Address (written while Europe was in the throes of the Napoleonic World Wars), as follows:

> If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause

[1]This sensible policy of utilizing the experience of war veterans in a post-war military organization was not adopted by Congress until one hundred and thirty-one years later, when, under the National Defense Act of 1920, World War veterans were encouraged to enter the National Guard and the Reserves. This opportunity was neglected after the Revolutionary War and again after the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the War with Spain. The italics are mine.

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the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor or caprice? . . . Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, in a respectably defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

In his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," General Washington had clearly defined the "suitable establishments" essential to a "respectably defensive posture." Now, as the first President of the American Republic, he made the promotion of these establishments his principal administration measure.

5

On the 18th of December, 1789, the President wrote in his diary:

Read over and digested my thoughts upon the subject of a National Militia, from the plans of the Militias of Europe, those of the Secretary of War[1] and Baron de Steuben.[2]

On the following day he wrote:

Committed the above thoughts to writing in order to send them to the Secretary for the Department of War, to be worked into the form of a Bill, with which to furnish the Committee of Congress which had been appointed to draft one.

The 19th of December was Saturday. In thinking of it over Sunday, Washington evidently doubted the propriety

[1]The Knox Plan of 1786. See Chapter VIII.

[2]The Steuben Plan of 1784. See Chapter VII.

of writing a Bill, for on the following Monday, the 21st, he wrote in the diary:

> Framed the above thoughts on the subject of a National Militia in the form of a letter, and sent it to the Secretary for the Department of War.

I have been unable to find a copy of the letter to the Secretary of War referred to in the diary entry of December 21st, and am therefore unable to say whether it contained a distinct new statement of Washington's military policy or whether it merely directed alterations in the Knox Plan of 1786. At any rate, the plan which Washington transmitted to Congress the following month was a revision of the plan which the Secretary of War had transmitted to the Continental Congress four years earlier. As the Knox Plan was a modification of Steuben's plan of 1784, and as both were based upon the "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" prepared by Washington in 1783, it was a convenient basis for transmitting the President's views to Congress.

The Second Session of the First Congress convened on the 4th day of January, 1790. On the 8th of January in the President's speech to Congress we find the following celebrated passage:

> Among the many interesting objects which will engage your attention that of providing for the common defence will merit particular regard. To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual ways of preserving peace.
>
> A free people ought not only to be armed but disciplined, to which end a uniform and well digested plan is requisite. . . .

This passage has been frequently quoted, but it is not so well known that it was intended by Washington to prepare the way for a particular "well digested plan" which he was about to transmit for the consideration and action of Congress.

On the 18th of January, Knox submitted his revised plan[1] to the President with the following letter of transmittal:

[1]The Knox Plan of 1790, as amended by Washington's direction, is published in full in the "Annals of Congress" and in the *American State*

SIR:

Having submitted to your consideration a plan for the arrangement of the militia of the United States, which I had presented to the late Congress and you having approved the general principles thereof, with certain exceptions; I now respectfully lay the same before you, modified according to the alterations you were pleased to suggest.

It has been my anxious desire to devise a national system of defence adequate to the probable exigencies of the United States, whether arising from internal or external causes; and, at the same time, to erect a standard of Republican magnanimity, independent of, and superior to, the powerful influences of wealth.[2]

The convulsive events, generated by the inordinate pursuit of riches or ambition, require that the government should possess a strong corrective arm.[3]

The idea is therefore submitted, whether an efficient military branch of the government can be invented, with safety to the great principles of liberty, unless the same shall be formed of the people themselves, and supported by their habits and manners.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
With the most perfect respect,
Your most obedient servant,
H. KNOX
Secretary for the Department of War.

Washington's diary contains the following entries relative to the foregoing letter and its enclosure:

Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. I. It was first printed by direction of the House of Representatives at the time of its introduction in Congress. There is a copy of this early "House Document" in the Boston Public Library. It is now very rare as only three hundred copies were printed.

[2]Here Knox refers to his departure from the then existing English militia organization in which, under a system of "substitutes," the rich and powerful were able to escape the burden of military duty. In the Knox Plan, liability to military service extended to rich and poor alike.

[3]It is unfortunate that the Secretary of War did not whisper this argument in the President's ear instead of writing it in his letter of Transmittal. Its publication did not further the adoption of his military plan. It was not good politics in the "year one" of the Union. Many of our forefathers, just at that time, were beginning to think that the "corrective arm" of the new Federal Government was already sufficiently strong.

January 20, Wednesday. A report of the Secretary at War, on the subject of the National Militia, altered agreeably to the ideas I communicated to him, was presented to me, in order to be laid before Congress.

January 21, Thursday. The above report was accordingly transmitted to both houses of Congress, in a written message from me.

The Special Message referred to above follows:

"GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: The Secretary for the Department of War has submitted to me certain principles to serve as a plan for the general arrangement of the militia of the United States.

Conceiving the subject to be of the highest importance to the welfare of our country, and liable to be placed in several points of view, I have directed him to lay the plan before Congress for their information, in order that they may make such use thereof as they may judge proper.

GEO. WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES, *January 21, 1790.*

6

The Knox Plan of 1790, as finally amended by Washington's direction, does not differ materially from the original plan of 1786. There were some changes required by the change in the form of the central government. Many of the peculiar financial expedients which Knox thought necessary in 1786 were no longer necessary under the new government with its ample financial and legislative powers. The new Constitution also made a new distribution of the powers of the central and state governments over the militia. The principal change in the plan itself was a reduction in the amount of training to be given to the young men in the "advanced corps." The period of attendance in the annual "camps of discipline" was reduced from 42 days per year to 30 days per year for the young men of eighteen and nineteen and 10 days for the young men of twenty. The total field training given in the "advanced corps" was thus reduced from 126 days to 70 days. No doubt Washington fully recognized the advantage of more prolonged training but it was offset by much greater cost and

by greater industrial burden. The primary object was to get the system adopted. To accomplish this Washington was willing to reduce the training still further if necessary.

It is to be especially noted that Washington retained that feature of the original Knox Plan which provided for drawing expeditionary forces from the militia. There were special reasons why this should appeal to him. In his own youth, with a detachment drawn from the Virginia militia, he had gone to the Ohio frontier and later had joined Braddock in his ill-fated expedition. This had been the beginning of Washington's public life and was an essential part of his education as a statesman as well as a soldier. It was because he had been one of our first pioneers in the Mississippi Valley that his vision of our future national opportunity was so far in advance of his times. Better than any of his contemporaries, he recognized that the history of the approaching century would be the history of an expanding frontier. The Knox Plan recognized this fully and would make it possible for other young gentlemen in the future to take part in the romance and adventure of the West, as Washington had done in his youth. It offered the most economical and efficient means of garrisoning the frontier. It offered a means of giving enlarged field experience to future militia officers. But more than all it was a measure of the highest statesmanship. It gave the exploitation of the West to the people themselves and not to a limited professional constabulary. In a later message to Congress (December 3, 1793) Washington asserted that the militia "may be trained to a degree of energy equal to every military exigency of the United States."[1] In saying this he had in mind Knox's plan for using specially selected detachments from the militia in lieu of regular professional forces.

[1]General Upton, in his *Military Policy of the United States*, makes no reference to this nor to any of the other numerous messages to Congress in which Washington urged a "well-regulated militia" as the sufficient basis of the national defence. At no place in his book is there any reference to what was the official military policy of Washington's Administration. Upton makes a brief reference to the Knox Plan of 1790. (*Military Policy of the U. S.*, p. 82) but gives no adequate explanation of any of its constructive features.

7

In reviewing the revised Knox Plan, it will be recognized as a highly scientific American adaptation of the species of military organization which is now typified in the Swiss system. If the President, to-day, should direct the general staff to make an adaptation of the modern Swiss system to meet American conditions, it would be impossible for it to construct a better solution than that which Washington submitted to the First Congress in 1790. In this connection we may be permitted to repeat that Washington had studied the Swiss system himself and that, through Steuben, he was familiar with its minutest details as they existed toward the close of the Eighteenth Century. But if Washington, Steuben, and Knox had never heard of Switzerland they must have arrived at substantially the same result.

Any competent scientific study of the military institutions appropriate to a modern democratic republic must inevitably lead to a solution approximately the same as that which Washington proposed and that which exists in Switzerland to-day. The Swiss military system is as inherently characteristic of democratic institutions as the Prussian system was inherently characteristic of autocratic institutions. Our principal interest in Switzerland is that it is an existing laboratory in which Washington's military policy has been undergoing a practical daily test for nearly a century and a half since he first proposed it.

CHAPTER X

THE NATIONAL DEFENCE BILL OF 1790

I

THE legislative history of the Knox Plan was very brief. It was submitted to both houses of Congress on the 21st of January, 1790. On that day it was referred to the Committee of the Whole House. It was never taken up in the Committee of the Whole and was never embodied in a legislative bill. On the 26th of April the Journal of the House contains the following entry:

> *Ordered* that the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union be discharged from further proceedings on the plan of the Secretary of War for the general arrangement of the militia of the United States, and that the said plan be referred to the Committee appointed to prepare and bring in a bill providing for the National Defence.

On the 1st of July, the Honorable Elias Boudinot of New Jersey, from this Committee, presented a bill for the organization of the militia which was not based upon the Knox Plan.

The failure of the Knox Plan was due to several causes. In the first place it is difficult to understand it as Knox wrote it. The Secretary of War had none of the remarkable clarity of expression which was characteristic of Alexander Hamilton in his reports from the Treasury. Madison, in his letter to Jefferson on the 24th of January, referred to the Knox Plan as "long and imperfectly understood." Writing on January 28th, Oliver Wolcott said, "The Article relative to the Militia is not very clear to my apprehension."[1]

[1]The author has been familiar with the Knox Plan for many years. But it is only recently, since he has been able to compare it with the earlier plans by Washington and Steuben, that he has been able to grasp

This lack of clarity was a special handicap at that time because Knox's paper had to compete for public interest with Hamilton's Report on the Public Credit. This brilliant document fully occupied the attention of the Committee of the Whole House during all the time that the Knox Plan was technically before it.

2

That the language of the Knox Plan failed to present its positive merits was a sufficient handicap. But it also contained many features of doubtful popularity at that time. In his letter of transmittal to the President, the Secretary of War had indicated that the system was designed to defend the United States from *internal* as well as external enemies. Further on he indicated that "the government should possess a strong corrective arm." These expressions were a little too strong for the times. The people, just then, were inclined to think that the new government was already over-endowed with coercive power. At a time when they were safeguarding themselves by annexing a "Bill of Rights" to the Constitution, they were indisposed to insist upon a strong corrective arm. In February, General Benjamin Lincoln wrote to Knox:

> Though it would make ours the strongest militia in the world, the people will not adopt it here if I know Massachusetts. The expense, pay of officers, no pay of men,[1] the burden on masters, calling the youth indiscriminately, disfranchisement in certain cases, officers excluded from active service, sub-

the full significance of its highly constructive provisions. Upton in his *Military Policy of the United States* made a brief reference to the Knox Plan but apparently did not consider it worth while to investigate its genesis. This is the more remarkable as General Upton says, "The plan seems to have originated with Baron von Steuben." Upton referred to the version in the *American State Papers* which contains a footnote referring the reader to Steuben's Pamphlet of 1784.

[1]Knox proposed pay for the officers on temporary duty as instructors in the "advanced corps" but not for the young men under instruction. The reasons for this distinction were perfectly sound but were not clearly stated and probably would not have satisfied the militia of that day.

jection to a draft[1] for a service of three years, &c,[1] will be magnified here and damn the bill.

Nor did the existing state militia organizations relish the proposed reforms. This is indicated by the following item from a contemporary number of the *Gazette of the United States:*

> By the returns of the Militia of the State of Connecticut, there appears to be six brigades, thirteen regiments of infantry, six of cavalry, three companies of matrosses, and three companies of State Guards, amounting in the whole to *thirty thousand* effective men, well officered and appointed, and completely armed: most of the regiments were reviewed last month, and are generally in a neat uniform. A degree of emulation pervades officers and privates to excel in the military art, that does honor to them as freemen, and as citizens of a republic, who are determined to support the constitution and government of the country, without the aid of a standing army, *or an expensive national militia. . . .*

Indeed if the State of Connecticut, with a population of only 235,000, could mobilize an effective army of 30,000 men, there would seem to be little occasion for reform, at least in that State.[2]

One other excerpt will serve to show the contemporary

[1]This refers to the proposed machinery for drawing an active army from the militia, when necessary, as described in Chapter VIII. General Lincoln's letter is in the *Knox Papers* in the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Among these papers is an autograph letter from Knox to Governor Hancock, enclosing a copy of his Militia Plan. In a postscript, the General adds: "Mrs. Knox has recently presented me with another son, so you see we are, by the blessing of God, supplying our proportion of young militia men."

[2]Connecticut was not alone in martial array at that time. We are informed by a later news item in the *Gazette of the United States* that the official returns of the State of Massachusetts for the year 1790 gave 9 divisions, 19 brigades, 73 regiments of infantry, 29 troops of cavalry, 254 corps of artillery, and 10 corps of "Division Infantry." Such an establishment must have embodied every able-bodied man in the state. No doubt the Massachusetts militia considered itself already sufficiently well-regulated. As it included all of the voters in the state and as its officers comprised most of its political leaders, it was prepared to sustain a referendum to that effect.

reaction to Knox's plan. On April 20, 1790, the following item appeared in the *Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser*, of Philadelphia:

> *Elizabethtown*, April 14, 1790. The plan for the organization of the Militia of the United States, by the Secretary of War is generally execrated in this State, as pregnant with mischief both to the agricultural and mining interests, as well as having a tendency to debauch the morals of the rising generation.

Such was the reaction of our grandsires to citizens' military training camps in the fourteenth year of the independence of the United States and in the first year of the Republic under the Constitution.

3

It is a significant fact that the Militia Bill introduced by Elias Boudinot on July 1, 1790,[1] is based on the solution that Washington regarded as most expedient politically in his "Sentiments" of 1783. In that document he recognized the advantages of both of the methods subsequently developed by Steuben and Knox but added: "I cannot conceal my private sentiment, that the formation of additional or light Companies [*i.e., in each existing militia regiment*] will be most consistent with the genius of our Countrymen and perhaps in their opinion most consonant to the Spirit of our Constitution." He had subsequently approved Steuben's plan as better from a purely military standpoint and recently he had endorsed Knox's elaborate modification of Steuben's plan. But the popular reaction to the Knox Plan had strongly confirmed his original judgment.

[1]This Bill is H. R. 81. There is no copy of this Bill in the House or Senate Archives or among the official documents in the Library of Congress. I am informed by Mr. William Tyler Page, Clerk of the House of Representatives, that the original copy of this Bill and all of the accompanying papers were destroyed by fire when the British burned the Capitol in 1814. Fortunately, I have been able to find the full text of the Bill running through several numbers of the *Gazette of the United States*, beginning with the issue of July 14, 1790.

4

The Militia Bill of July 1, 1790, as originally introduced, was a sound measure and, if it had been passed, it must have placed our military establishment on a sound basis for future development. It contained the essential feature of Washington's conception of a "well-regulated militia," that is, a separate grouping of the younger men into special organizations where they would be available for immediate military service and where they would receive more training than could be given to the general body of the militia.

The first three sections of the bill defined the militia as comprising all able-bodied men available for military duty between the ages of eighteen and fifty. They provided for the territorial organization of these into military units to include the division and defined the exemptions from military duty. In Sections 4 and 6 the bill outlined the essential principles of Washington's "well-regulated militia" in the following language:

> . . . . That in order to promote military knowledge among the citizens of the United States in their youth, and for the purpose of furnishing the means of immediate defence in case of invasion or insurrection, the citizens of the United States forming the militia thereof as aforesaid, and who shall be of the age of eighteen years, and under the age of twenty-five years, shall be separately enrolled . . . and officered by the State, and formed into distinct companies by themselves, . . . which companies shall form the light infantry or riflemen of each battalion or regiment. . . . That to each brigade there shall be at least one company of artillery, and one troop of horse. . . . That each company of artillery and each troop of horse shall be formed of volunteers from the brigade. . . . That each company of the militia of the United States, who shall form the light infantry or rifle companies, the artillery and troops of horse as aforesaid, shall rendezvous four times in every year, in companies, for the purpose of training and disciplining and improving in martial exercises; and twice in every year in regiment or battalion. . . . And all other companies of said militia shall rendezvous twice in every year, in

companies, and twice in every year in regiment or battalion as aforesaid.

The time allotted to training was, of course, too short. But the friends of the measure, as practical statesmen, recognized that the important first step was to segregate the younger men into special training organizations. They would thus be freed from the inertia of the general body of the militia which comprised all able-bodied men up to the age of fifty. If this separation could be established as the fundamental basis of organization, the question of more and better training could be treated as a separate issue later. In his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," Washington had indicated that the younger men "have a natural fondness of Military parade (which passion is almost ever prevalent at that period of life)." Therefore to give these younger men a special organization with selected instructors for that purpose was the essential first step. If that much could be secured at the start, the system would unquestionably grow in strength as it would grow in popularity. The young men in the special companies of infantry, cavalry, and artillery would themselves demand further progress. The next logical step would be a permanent grouping of these organizations into higher tactical units.[1] They would then actually form the "advanced corps" as proposed by Knox.

But even with its limited provisions for training, the Boudinot bill of 1790 was an important preparedness measure. The younger men would remain in the rifle companies seven years and would therefore have forty-two days' training before graduating into the general body of the militia. The bill also provided for effective Federal inspection and super-

[1]It will be noted that this progressive evolution actually took place later in the gradual development of the National Guard. First separate local companies were formed. The men of all these companies gave much more time to drill than was prescribed in Boudinot's bill. Later these companies were grouped into battalions and regiments and still later into brigades and divisions. In the actual case this process of evolution was slow because it did not proceed under uniform national support. If the plan of 1790 had been adopted, the process, under active Federal support and supervision, must have been much more rapid.

vision and established discipline upon a sound basis. The state of the finances did not permit a satisfactory provision for clothing and equipping the militia at that time, but through a system of fines and exemption taxes, funds for this purpose would gradually become available. The provision that the infantrymen should provide their own arms was finally incorporated in the Act of 1792 and has been the subject of much ridicule in later times. But before joining in this laughter we should remember that among the amendments that Congress had just submitted to the states was the following:

ARTICLE II

RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS

A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

The debates in the First Congress will reveal that *universal armament at their own expense* was then regarded by the people as one of their most cherished rights. Their only fear, at that time, was that a tyrannical central government might seek to deny or restrict that sacred privilege. With everybody of militia age together with their younger brothers and their grandsires in that emphatic mood, it hardly seemed necessary to buy another lot of muskets, powder horns, and bullet molds for the militia at public expense. It would be enough to issue powder, lead, and flints upon mobilization.

PART II

A LOST LEGACY

CHAPTER XI

WASHINGTON IN DEFEAT

I

THE militia problem was before the House of Representatives from July 1, 1790, until the passage of the notorious Militia Act of 1792. The following brief history of the legislation is compiled from the House Journals:

H. R. 81 was introduced in the Second Session of the First Congress, July 1, 1790, by Mr. Boudinot. This is the highly constructive bill described in the foregoing chapter. It was printed by order of the House but no further action was taken in the Second Session, which adjourned on September 12th.

H. R. 102 was introduced by Mr. Boudinot in the Third Session of the First Congress, December 14, 1790. I have been unable to find any copy of this bill, but the debates as given in the *Annals of Congress* indicate that it was identical with H. R. 81. It was debated in the Committee of the Whole and in the House from December 16th until December 24th. On that date it was recommitted to Mr. Wadsworth of Connecticut, Mr. Giles of Virginia, and Mr. Tucker of South Carolina, with instructions to bring in an amended bill.

H. R. 112 was introduced by Mr. Wadsworth on January 4, 1791. This is H. R. 102 as amended by direction of the House. I have been unable to find a copy of this bill, but the debates indicate that it still contained the essential features of Washington's "well-regulated militia." It was crowded off the calendar by other important legislation and did not come to a vote in the First Congress. In the interval between December 27th and adjournment, Congress was fully absorbed in legislation on the Public Debt, the admission of Kentucky and Vermont, the incorporation of the Bank of the United States, the Excise Law and a Post Office Bill. The First Congress therefore adjourned March 3, 1791, be-

fore it could resume consideration of Mr. Wadsworth's Militia Bill.

H. R. 148 was introduced in the First Session, Second Congress, by Mr. Wadsworth, November 21, 1791. There is no available copy of this bill but the subsequent debates and a report of the action of the Committee of the Whole in February and March, 1792, indicate that it was substantially the same as the Wadsworth Bill of the First Congress. After debate and amendment in the Committee of the Whole, it was taken up in the House on March 5, 1792. After further amendment on that date it passed the House the following day. After passage with amendments by the Senate and conference between the two Houses, it was finally signed by the President on May 8th. It is therefore officially known as the *Militia Act of May 8, 1792.*

2

It has been difficult to restore the history of this remarkable degeneration from Boudinot's constructive bill of 1790 to its final form as passed in the worthless Militia Act of 1792. All of the House bills above referred to and all of the House records pertaining to them were destroyed when the British burned the Capitol in 1814. The War Department archives pertaining to our early military legislation were destroyed at the same time. Nor have I been able to find any of these papers among the public documents in the Library of Congress. The condensed debates in the *Annals of Congress* throw some light on the subject and particularly on the temper of the House at that time. But without the bills themselves as references they contribute little in the way of connected narrative.

Fortunately, I have been able to restore the essentials of the story from the files of old newspapers in the Library of Congress. I found the original Boudinot Bill in several successive issues of the *Gazette of the United States*, beginning July 14, 1790. I was unable to find a copy of H. R. 102, of H. R. 112, or of H. R. 148 as originally introduced by Jeremiah Wadsworth. But fortunately, the final report of the Committee of the Whole House was published in Philadelphia

in several successive issues of *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*. There I found the final version of the Wadsworth Bill as it was reported to the House on or about March 2, 1792.

Though the Wadsworth Bill was debated and amended in the Committee of the Whole, it still contained all of the essential features of Washington's "well-regulated" militia when it was reported to the House. The original provision that *all* youngsters under twenty-five should be enrolled in the light infantry companies had been stricken out. But the light infantry companies were still retained with the provision that these companies and those of cavalry and artillery should have more training than the general body of the militia. The only change was that all of these special training units should be composed of volunteers. This of course left the fundamental principle of the bill intact. It would still provide for embodying a sufficient number of the younger men into local company units of infantry, cavalry, and field artillery.

The bill still provided for effective federal inspection and for a system of discipline based upon courts martial for both officers and men. In a new section it made Steuben's *Blue Book* the basis of training and instruction and provided for the elimination of all officers who should not procure the book and master its principles. The only important provision in the original bill which was not retained was the tax to be levied on persons exempted from militia duty. Indeed the only essential change was the substitution of voluntary service for compulsory service in the special training companies. The original bill would have provided an effective first step toward the establishment of an organized "advanced corps" as proposed by Knox. The amended bill would have provided an equally effective first step toward Steuben's Continental Militia or our modern National Guard. Hence, as the bill left the Committee of the Whole, it still contained the essential principles of Washington's "well-regulated militia."

3

The Militia Bill was taken up in the House on the 5th day of March, 1792. On that day every constructive feature

was amended out of it. The provisions for discipline and for federal inspection and supervision were cut out. The essential principle of separate organization and special training for the younger and more active men was eliminated. Indeed no requirement for training of any kind remained in the bill. As amended the bill no longer provided for Washington's "well-regulated militia." On the following day the amended bill passed the House as the notorious Militia Act of 1792. Washington had proposed militia in terms of "gilt-edged" bonds. Congress issued it in terms of "watered stock."[1]

The official records give no reason for this astonishing and sudden action. The only pertinent entry in the *Annals of Congress* for March 5th is as follows:

> The House proceeded to consider the amendments reported from the Committee of the Whole House to the Bill more effectually to provide for the national defence, by establishing a uniform militia throughout the United States: and the same being severally read, some were agreed to, and others disagreed to. The said bill was then further amended: and together with the amendments, ordered to be engrossed, and read the third time to-morrow.

There is no record as to the language of the amendments or who introduced them or what was said in debate. On the question as to the final passage of the amended bill, the *yeas* and *nays* are given. Among those who voted *no* were Jeremiah Wadsworth,[2] the original sponsor of the bill, and General Anthony Wayne, his committee colleague and principal supporter.

[1]General Upton very properly condemned the Militia Act of 1792 in his *Military Policy of the United States*. But he did not investigate the legislative history of the measure and therefore made no reference to its origin in Washington's statesmanlike plan of national defence. Indeed his book contains no reference to what Washington meant by a well-regulated militia.

[2]If Colonel Wadsworth had been able to secure the passage of the original Wadsworth Bill, it would not have been necessary for his great-great-grand-nephew, James W. Wadsworth, Jr., to secure the passage of the National Defense Act of 1920. The Wadsworth Bill of 1791 provided for an adequate national defence system at the very beginning of our national history.

4

So failed Washington's most cherished administration measure. Though there is no official record as to the reasons for its defeat, a careful consideration of the history of the period enables us to form an opinion. As we have seen, the Militia Bill was crowded out of the First Congress by other important legislation. When it came before the Second Congress it encountered a new political situation. By this time party lines had formed. The followers of Hamilton and Jefferson confronted each other in hostile array. Jefferson believed in government by the people. Hamilton did not. In the Constitutional Convention, Hamilton had proposed, what was in effect, a strongly centralized elective monarchy as the proper government for the United States. He believed in the rule of the privileged few. He frankly and repeatedly avowed that he had no faith in the wisdom or the virtue of the people, nor in the stability or vigor of democratic institutions. In the spring of 1792, it was the belief of Jefferson, Madison, and other Republicans that Hamilton was attempting by liberal interpretation of the Constitution and by executive precedent, to pervert the existing form of government into the form which he had unsuccessfully espoused in 1787. In March, 1792, it was therefore extremely doubtful whether America was going to be safe for democracy. The pioneers of the type of government which we now have were therefore indisposed to give effective military power of any kind to an administration so strongly influenced by Alexander Hamilton. In defeating Washington's "well-regulated militia," its enemies paid it the compliment of recognizing its merits. They were not prepared, just at that time, to place the potential military energies of the Union in negotiable form.

Two editorial comments will reveal something of the contemporary reaction to the Militia Act of 1792. On May 9th, the day after its approval, we have the following from the *Gazette of the United States*, which was edited by Hamilton's friend, Mr. Fenno:

> The Militia Law will probably seem a feeble system to many persons versed in military affairs. The great difference of the

> militia laws of the several states is such, that some will improve, and others perhaps run retrograde in consequence of this law of the United States. But improvement and amendment will be made from time to time, and it is to be hoped that eventually this act will not be one of the least perfect parts of the national system.

Jefferson's friend, Mr. Freneau of the *National Gazette*, took a more optimistic view. In his issue of May 8th he said:

> A militia system, the true and equal guardian of freedom and a free country, which at several preceding sessions experienced insurmountable obstacles, has, at the present, been at last accomplished.

5

I have been unable to find any direct evidence as to Washington's feelings on the defeat of what he considered his most important administration measure. His diary entries for that period are missing. But he suffered a great depression just at that time. He was disgusted by the rise of party spirit in Congress and in his cabinet and made up his mind not to serve a second term as President. No doubt the failure of the most cherished measure of his public life had something to do with this resolution. Three days before he finally decided to approve the Militia Act, he sent for his friend and neighbor, James Madison, and sought his advice on his plan to withdraw from public life. Madison immediately wrote a full record of the interview. According to this record, Washington informed Madison:

> . . . that the fatigues and disagreeableness of his situation were in fact scarcely tolerable to him, that he only uttered his real sentiments when he declared that his inclination would lead him rather to go to his farm, take his spade in his hand, and work for his bread, than remain in his present situation. . . .

Washington finally signed the Militia Act, not because he approved it, but because he was always reluctant to use his

veto power, and because, in this case, he hoped for favorable amendment in the future. In every subsequent Annual Message he still urged the establishment of a "well-regulated militia"—precisely as if Congress had not legislated at all on that subject.

CHAPTER XII

POLITICS AND PREPAREDNESS

I

JEFFERSON gives us an interesting glimpse of the interplay of military policy and partisan politics in Washington's First Administration. In the following extract from his memoirs we have a vivid picture of our First President surrounded by his cabinet:

> *November 28, 1792*—Met at the Presidents . . . Randolph had prepared a draft of the speech.[1] The clause recommending fortifications was left out, but that for a military academy was inserted. I opposed it, as unauthorized by the Constitution. Hamilton and Knox approved it without discussion. Randolph was for it, saying that the words of the Constitution authorizing Congress to lay taxes, &c., for the common defence, might comprehend it. *The President said he would not choose to recommend anything against the Constitution*,[2] but if it were doubtful, he was so impressed of the necessity of the measure, that he would report it to Congress, and let them decide for themselves whether the Constitution authorized it or not. It was therefore left in.[3]

From Jefferson's expression of concern for the Constitution, we might expect to find a formidable plan for a national military academy in the pending message to Congress.[4] But the actual recommendation must seem very simple and inoffensive to modern eyes. After an unusually eloquent plea for his "well-regulated militia," the President

[1]That is, the pending message to Congress.

[2]The italics are mine.

[3]Jefferson's *Memoirs, Correspondence, &c.*, IV, 499.

[4]Message to both Houses of Congress, December 3, 1793.

modestly expressed a doubt as to whether that reform had been fully accomplished in the recent Militia Act, and:

> . . . whether a material feature of an improvement of it, ought not to be, to afford an opportunity for the study of those branches of the military art which can scarcely ever be attained by practice alone.

This passage is highly significant. It reveals Washington's conception of the primary purpose of a military academy. Here we have his first formal recommendation to Congress on that important subject. His language and the context in the message indicate that the military academy he has in mind is to serve the purpose of diffusing theoretical military knowledge in the national militia. To accomplish this it must obviously be a normal school for the training of militia leaders and instructors.

The extract from the diary also throws an interesting light on Jefferson's political strategy at that time. He was not opposing a military academy because he was opposed to military education. Indeed the military academy was finally established at West Point during his administration as President. He was not opposed to Washington's "well-regulated militia." As we shall presently see, he fully approved it and later sought its adoption as his principal administration measure after he became President. We find him insisting upon a most meticulously strict interpretation of the Constitution. Yet we owe half of our present national domain to the fact that, on occasion, he could give that instrument the most liberal interpretation. Jefferson was a strict constructionist, just at that time, because liberal construction was the principal weapon of his great opponent. He was therefore resisting every departure from the strict letter of the federal compact.

This diary entry has all of the vividness of drama. There at the head of the table we behold the figure of Washington. He alone at that time was able to see the best in both Hamilton and Jefferson. He found wisdom in both of them and had sought in vain to reconcile a conflict that was to endure for more than a century. How would he deal with this clash

in his official family? Transposing the language of the diary into the first person, this is what he says:

> *I would not choose* to recommend anything against the Constitution. But if it be doubtful, I am so impressed of the necessity of the measure, that I will report it to Congress, *and let them decide for themselves whether the Constitution authorizes it or not.*

Can there be a finer example of political tact than this? Or of ready wit, for that matter? When Washington said that, there must have been a twinkle in his eye.

And Jefferson's strategy in the Cabinet was also the strategy of his friends in Congress. The Federalist reaction to it is given in the following extract from a letter written by Fisher Ames a few days after the passage of the Militia Bill:

> We hear incessantly from the old foes of the Constitution, "This is unconstitutional, and that is." And, indeed, what is not? I scarce know a point that has not produced this cry, not excepting a motion for adjournment. . . . The fishing bill was unconstitutional; it was unconstitutional to receive plans of finance from the Secretary; to give bounties; to make the militia worth having. Order is unconstitutional: credit is tenfold worse.

2

But if the fathers of modern democracy opposed an effective military organization in 1792, it was for temporary political reasons and not because they were opposed to a sound system of national defence. The Hamiltonian political system was finally defeated in the election of 1800. After Jefferson became President, he repeatedly urged the establishment of a "well-regulated militia" in precisely the form that Washington had advocated.[1] The underlying principle of such an institution has never been stated more concisely than President Jefferson stated it in the following sentence from a letter to Madison:

[1]John Adams also had urged militia reform.

> Convinced that a militia of all ages promiscuously are entirely useless for distant service, and that we never shall be safe until we have a selected corps for a year's distant service at least, *the classification of our militia is now the most essential thing for the United States to do.*[1]

In his Annual Message of December 3, 1805, while contemplating the growing war clouds in Europe, Jefferson wrote as follows:

> Whether it will be necessary to augment our land forces will be decided by occurrences probably in the course of your session. In the meantime you will consider whether it would not be expedient for a state of peace as well as of war so to organize or class the militia as would enable us in any sudden emergency to call for the services of the younger portions, unencumbered with the old and those having families. Upward of 300,000 able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 26 years, which the last census shows we may count within our limits, will

[1]The italics are mine. It will be interesting at this point to notice that Hamilton had precisely the same view as to how a well-regulated militia should be formed. He wrote in the *Federalist* as follows:

> "The project of disciplining all the Militia of the United States is as futile, as it would be injurious, if it were capable of being carried into execution. A tolerable expertness in military movements, is a business that requires time and practice. To oblige the great body of the yeomanry, and of the other classes of the citizens to be under arms for the purpose of going through military exercises and evolutions, as often as might be necessary, to acquire the degree of perfection which would entitle them to the character of a well-regulated militia, would be a real grievance to the people and a serious public inconvenience and loss. . . .
>
> But though the scheme of disciplining the whole nation must be abandoned as mischievous or impracticable, yet it is a matter of the utmost importance, that a well-digested plan should, as soon as possible, be adopted for the proper establishment of the militia.
>
> The attention of the government ought particularly to be directed to the formation of a select corps of moderate size, upon such principles as will really fit it for service in case of need. By thus circumscribing the plan, it will be possible to have an excellent body of well-trained militia, ready to take the field whenever the defence of the state shall require it. . . ."

On this point, at least, Jefferson and Hamilton were in full agreement. Indeed this conception of a "well-regulated militia" was accepted by all thoughtful men of that generation, however they might differ in other respects.

furnish a competent number for offense or defense in any point where they may be wanted, and will give time for raising regular forces[1] after the necessity for them shall become certain and the reducing to the early period of life all its active service can not but be desirable to our younger men of the present as well as of future times, inasmuch as it engages to them in more advanced age a quiet and undisturbed repose in the bosom of their families. I can not then but earnestly recommend to your early consideration the expediency of so modifying our militia system as, by a separation of the more active part from that which is less so, we may draw from it, when necessary, an efficient corps fit for real and active service, and to be called in regular rotation.

President Jefferson was as unsuccessful as President Washington had been in securing sound militia legislation. His disappointment as well as his hope for the future are indicated by an extract from a letter to General Kosciusko written shortly after his retirement from the Presidency. In this letter he says:

Two measures have not been adopted, which I pressed on Congress repeatedly at their meetings. The one, to settle the whole ungranted territory of Orleans, by donations of land to able-bodied young men, to be engaged and carried there at the public expense, who would constitute a force always ready on the spot to defend New Orleans.[2]

The other was, to class the militia according to the years of their birth, and make all those from twenty to twenty-five liable

[1]Here Jefferson refers to "regular forces" in the same sense that Washington did during the Revolution. He had in mind the formation of a "Continental Army" from the general body of his organized militia if occasion should demand it. The message was written the year of Austerlitz. He foresaw that we might be drawn into the Napoleonic World War. He therefore sought primarily a nation-wide organization to repel invasion. This would require large numbers. From this larger defensive mass, a smaller special force for more prolonged service, in Canada or elsewhere, could be speedily formed if necessary. A most effective means of drawing an active army from a well-regulated militia had been proposed by Knox and indorsed by Washington while Jefferson was in Washington's Cabinet.

[2]When this was written, New Orleans, though a strategic position of the utmost importance, lay in a sparsely settled region.

to be trained and called into service at a moment's warning. This would have given us a force of three hundred thousand young men, prepared by proper training, for service in any part of the United States; while those who had passed through that period would remain at home, liable to be used in their own or adjacent states. . . . But these measures will, I hope, be completed by my successor, who, to the purest principles of republican patriotism, adds a wisdom and foresight second to no man on earth.[1]

When Madison became President he did everything in his power to carry a sound militia policy through Congress. In every message he urged the establishment of a "well-regulated militia," as it had been accurately defined by Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson. In his message of January 3, 1810, he specifically endorsed the fundamental principle of classification in the following terms:

I submit to the consideration of Congress, moreover, the expediency of such a classification and organization of the militia as will best insure prompt and successive aids from that source, adequate to emergencies which may call for them.[2]

Later the same year in his message of December 5th, the President proposed a practical measure of preparedness which was finally adopted with important results upon the eve of our second World War more than a century later. In the course of recommendations for training the militia he said:

Toward an accomplishment of this important work I recommend for the consideration of Congress, the expediency of instituting a system which shall, in the first instance, call into the field at the public expense and for a given time certain portions of the commissioned and non-commissioned officers. The instruction and discipline thus acquired would gradually diffuse

[1] I am indebted to Gen. Jefferson Randolph Kean for a copy of this letter.

[2] The emergencies that called for them were at hand. War with Great Britain lay only two years in the future.

> through the entire body of the militia, that practical knowledge and promptitude for active service which are the great ends to be pursued.

In this message Madison was calling for the adoption of what later became known as the "Plattsburg system." The practical value of such a system, on a thorough national scale, as a preparation for our first World War, may be inferred from its value in our preparations for our second World War.

3

It will be seen from the foregoing that, contrary to the accepted verdict of history, both Jefferson and Madison had urged a fully effective and, in fact, the only practicable form of preparedness for the War of 1812. Why their advice was not accepted by Congress is therefore an interesting question. As political forces had defeated sound militia legislation in 1792, so now political forces of another kind were to defeat it again. The Militia Act of 1792 not only killed a well-regulated militia but gave Federal sanction to an "unregulated militia." It actually adopted "the project of disciplining *all* of the Militia of the United States" which in the language of Hamilton would be "as futile, as it would be injurious, if it were capable of being carried into execution." This futile and injurious organization had actually been sanctioned by the Act of 1792. By the time of Jefferson's administration it had become a powerful nation-wide organization. It formed a vast array of territorial regiments, brigades, and divisions, generally untrained, and entirely free from national supervision or control. In some states, some of its regiments under vigorous leaders like Andrew Jackson were actually assembled and trained. But most of the host assembled once a year for the "annual muster" which was always an "annual spree" and generally little more.

The Militia Returns for 1808 show that in Maryland alone, with a white population under 240,000, there were three major generals, twelve brigadier generals, 50 regiments of infantry, 35 captains of cavalry, and an aggregate strength of

more than 39,000 men.[1] There were six regiments of infantry in Frederick County alone. The Consolidated Return for the whole Union gives 80 major generals, 226 brigadier generals, 1033 infantry regiments, 473 cavalry captains, 8892 infantry captains, and an aggregate strength of 674,287. This is a more numerous force than the Coalition was ever able to mass against Napoleon. As the 30,000 untrained officers of this mighty host were proud of their plumed hats and tinsel uniforms, as they took their military dignities seriously and included among themselves practically all of the political leaders in the country, they opposed a powerful vested interest to any effective reform.

And there was still another political impediment. When the Constitution was first ratified there was little national feeling and many men regarded the new union as a doubtful experiment. The feeling was widespread that the interests of a majority of the states might easily become fatal to a sectional minority. In that event it was widely held that the minority could and should secede. We are disposed to think of the doctrine of secession in connection with the Southern States and the issue of slavery. But its origin was older and much more widespread than that. In 1796 Oliver Wolcott urged that New England should secede if Thomas Jefferson should be elected President. In that year, Connecticut feared and hated Jefferson just as, later, South Carolina feared and hated Lincoln. In 1814, in the Hartford Convention, the actual secession of New England was all but accomplished. While large numbers of men, North as well as South, believed in the divine right of secession they were indisposed to give the central government any effective military power. It might be used for coercion as well as for national defence.

[1]In the Library of Congress there is a rare pamphlet entitled "The Militia's Guide" published at Montpelier, Vermont, in 1807. On the title page, the author describes himself as "*Larned Lamb, Esquire, Lieutenant Colonel and Commander of the Third Regiment, in the Second Brigade, and Fourth Division of Militia in the State of Vermont.*" As Vermont then had a population of only 200,000, it is interesting to realize that she was able to maintain four infantry divisions. In order to fill their ranks it would have been necessary to enroll the "Green Mountain girls" as well as their famous brothers.

In a large sense, therefore, we may say that effective national defence was a delicate political issue until after the question of secession had been finally settled in the supreme court of Civil War.

4

The attitude of Congress on the eve of the War of 1812 is revealed by a report of a committee of the Senate which had been appointed to consider the classification of the militia as proposed by President Madison in his message of January 3, 1810. This report, in part, is as follows:

That, in considering the subject submitted to them, impediments of various and insuperable kinds presented themselves to view. The Constitution of the United States gives to Congress only a qualified agency on the subject of the militia. . . . All therefore, within the power of Congress, seems to have been already done, unless it should be deemed expedient to make a new organization, by a classification which will constitute a select and a reserve militia.

The prejudices against such a mode of organization in many parts of the Union, and the difficulties to be surmounted, at a moment like the present, have deterred the committee from submitting such a project.

If the states are anxious for an effective militia, to them belong the power, and to them belong the means of rendering the militia truly our bulwark in war, and our safeguard in peace,[1] and as the committee are willing to hope that the states will not be unmindful of the great duty of providing for the national

[1]The italics are mine. In this passage the Senate Committee rose to the heights of prophecy. In 1810, the states were unwilling, under the Constitution, to give the nation a "well-regulated militia." To-day under the same Constitution, the states and their people are voluntarily and loyally giving their fullest support to that modern embodiment of a "well-regulated militia" which is known as the National Guard. But resistance to a complete solution now comes from the opposite direction. The states are eager to increase the strength and efficiency of that force while the Union is now the reluctant party. The difficulty lies in the practical administration of the budget. The development of the National Guard has been hampered because essential funds have been diverted to maintain an expansible standing army which would be entirely unnecessary if our "well-regulated militia" were permitted and encouraged to grow.

safety by a well ordered and effective militia, and as the committee are unwilling to derive any power to Congress, not expressly given by the Constitution, nor necessarily incident to the powers delegated, they submit the following resolution, viz.:

Resolved, that the committee be discharged from further consideration of this subject.

5

It was the "unregulated militia" of the Act of 1792 that failed in the War of 1812. Washington's "well-regulated militia" was not tried. It may therefore be interesting to consider what the issue might have been if he had been able to place the potential military resources of the nation in negotiable form. For this purpose let us consider how Steuben's military system might have met the situation in 1812.[1] The strength of Steuben's National Guard in 1812 would have been 49,000—more than doubled with the growth of population since 1784. Throughout the country there would have been 100,000 young men who had graduated from the force in the past ten years. With these to draw from and with more than half a million untrained men of military age, there could have been no difficulty in attaining and maintaining the war strength of 98,000 men.

By 1812, practically all of the veteran officers of the Revolution would have passed the military age. But they would have been replaced by officers who had risen from grade to grade in Steuben's legions. Most of the commanders and staff officers would have been graduates of Steuben's three military academies. With staff officers so trained there must have been plans of concentration, strategic deployment, and supply based upon the well-known conditions and requirements of an organized force actually in being. Each legion and lower unit would

[1]The Steuben Plan is taken in this discussion because it was based upon a volunteer force like our present National Guard. Much larger forces would have resulted from the Knox Plan or from the Boudinot Plan of 1790 or from the Classification Plan advocated by Jefferson and Madison.

have had a commander accustomed to handle it in the field. Each officer and man would have been accustomed, in peace time, to camp and march with his war unit. The War Department would have been prepared to administer the war organization because the war organization and the familiar peace organization would have been the same. Could a British raiding force have burned the Capitol of a country organized like this? Can there be any doubt that, in these circumstances, the war must have ended with the conquest of Canada[1] in a single campaign?

6

It has become almost an article of faith to charge President Jefferson with our unpreparedness for the War of 1812. To the extent that he was responsible for the Militia Act of 1792 there is some foundation for this charge. But in 1792 he felt that the nation was confronted by a more immediate and pressing danger than foreign hostility. From the beginning of his administration as President, he proposed complete and effective preparedness in the only form that was feasible economically, or consistent with the genius of his people. He did not propose a standing army sufficient for the national defence because such a proposal would have been absurd. A regular establishment adequate for the defence of Continental America would have been an economic burden even more intolerable in 1812 than it would be to-day.

And Jefferson's naval policy was conditioned by his military resources. If he had been able to assure defence by a "well-regulated" militia, the navy would have been free for its legitimate sea mission. It was because Congress denied him the only feasible and effective means of land defence that he sought gun boats and other naval means for the defence of our ports and harbors. If the President had been permitted to establish his "well-regulated" militia in 1805, there could have been no need to divert the navy from its true mission—the defence of our commerce and our neutral rights at sea.

[1]The scattered British forces in Canada numbered less than 4000 in 1812. They never exceeded 15,000 even in 1814.

But could there have been a second war with Great Britain if Washington had been able to establish his "respectably defensive posture"? When Steuben proposed a well-organized militia in 1783, he said that it "would make us more respectable with the powers of Europe than if we maintain an army of 50,000 men." The equivalent of that force in 1812 would be an army of more than 100,000 men. We were dragged into the War of 1812 solely because we were not respectable in the eyes of Europe. Both France and Britain treated us with contempt. With both we were repeatedly on the verge of war. With our soil impregnable from invasion, with power to seize Canada, or Louisiana, or the Floridas at will, and with a tight little navy having no thought but for the open sea, our weight might have been different in the councils of the world. The impressment of American seamen might not have been such a harmless sport. If President Jefferson tried later to support his diplomacy by blockades and embargoes, it was because he had repeatedly sought and had been denied the only military sanctions that could have been effective.

CHAPTER XIII

A NEW GOSPEL

I

THE "unregulated" militia of the Act of 1792 failed completely in the War of 1812. But there is nothing in the history of that conflict that throws the slightest discredit upon a "well-regulated militia" as Washington conceived it. Indeed both types of militia took part in the war. An eyewitness gives us glimpses of two bodies of the "unregulated" militia as he saw them in 1814. Of the first he says:

> About three hundred militia from Adams County, Pennsylvania, entered the place on their way to Erie. They were without order, and apparently without officers—mean, dirty, ugly, and in every respect contemptible.

And of the other:

> The soldiers are under no more restraint than a herd of swine. Reasoning, remonstrating, threatening and ridiculing the officers, they show their sense of equality and their total want of subordination.[1]

But in 1813, Andrew Jackson wrote to James Monroe, referring to his own militia:

> They are the choicest of our citizens. . . . They go at their country's call to do the will of the Government. No conscientious scruples trouble them. Nay, they will rejoice at the opportunity of placing the American eagle on the ramparts of Mobile, Pensacola, and Fort St. Augustine.[2]

[1]From Amos Kendall's *Autobiography*, pp. 98, 124. Cited by K. C. Babcock in his *Rise of American Nationality*, p. 79.

[2]From Parton's *Jackson*, I, 372. The places referred to were then in Spanish territory.

The comparative value of these two kinds of troops was demonstrated by two conspicuous tests in the closing months of the war. In August of 1814, a British detachment encountered a body of militia at Bladensburg. The invaders swept the defenders from the field, burned the American capitol, and returned to their ships unmolested and at their leisure.[1]

In the following January, a larger British force, composed of Peninsular Veterans and commanded by Packenham, one of Wellington's chosen lieutenants, encountered the American militia on the approaches to New Orleans. This militia held its ground, while General Packenham, with two thousand of the veterans who had driven Napoleon out of Spain, lay dead upon the field. At Bladensburg the British encountered the typical "unregulated" militia of the Act of 1792. At New Orleans they met a sporadic fragment of that "well-regulated militia," composed of younger and more active men which Washington had regarded as the true "palladium of our security." Jackson had done partially and incompletely, in a corner of the Southwest, what Washington had sought to do completely and uniformly for the nation.

2

But most of the militia of the War of 1812 was the unregulated militia of the Bladensburg type. Its failure was so complete that it was justly discredited. And unfortunately this discredit extended to the whole conception of militia as an effective means of national defence. Perhaps in time practical men, reflecting upon exceptions like the Battle of New Orleans, might have seen that the general failure of the militia was due to specific defects for which Washington had proposed effective remedies. But unfortunately during the war the militia had developed another and apparently a hopeless defect.

A body of militia, in the midst of a campaign in northern

[1]The defeat of the Maryland militia at Bladensburg has been frequently cited. But we do not hear so often that this same British column was repulsed by Maryland militia a few days later at North Point.

New York, refused to cross the Canadian border on the constitutional ground that militia could be used only to repel invasion and therefore could not invade enemy territory. Other bodies of militia, on similar occasions, handed down similar judicial decisions. That was the last straw in the minds of all practical men. Difficulties of organization and training might eventually be corrected, but why go to that trouble if the force could not be used for general military purposes after being organized and trained? How could a general trust an army that might spring the Constitution on him when he proposed to pursue a defeated foe?

This notion that militia organizations, trained in time of peace, cannot be used for general military purposes in time of war, retarded the development of our military system for more than a century. It was, of course, absurd. No such interpretation of the Constitution could have entered the mind of Washington who had presided over the Constitutional Convention; or of Madison who had debated the militia clauses before him; or of Hamilton who had supported them so ably in the *Federalist*. But we need not enter into the mazes of this discredited constitutional heresy. It is sufficient to remind ourselves that a way was found for the National Guard to cross the Atlantic and fight in France without violating the Constitution. Indeed Jackson's letter to Monroe, cited above, indicates that even in 1813 there was at least one clear-headed American who was disturbed by no such qualms. He was eager to lead his militia to the conquest of the Floridas from Spain and was delicately suggesting that ambitious enterprise to the Secretary of State.

3

If the militia had been discredited by the war, a new force came out of it with the highest credit and prestige. Before the War of 1812 the regular army had been regarded as a constabulary for the Indian Frontier and had never been considered by Washington and his associates or successors as an integral part of the national defence organization. War

armies as they conceived them were to be drawn from the general body of the militia which was to be "well-regulated" in order to accomplish that object. As the war clouds approached in Jefferson's administration, he sought in vain to prepare for it according to Washington's plan. His successor urged the adoption of the same sound military policy. Failing in their efforts to secure the only possible form of adequate preparedness, they were forced to direct their attention to other means—among them an expansion of the regular troops.

Congress authorized increases in the regular army in 1808 and again in 1812. But it was difficult to secure enlistments. Nor can an effective field army be made by the simple device of expanding a scattered frontier constabulary. The existing officer corps had little or no military experience or education. Many of its leaders, like the unspeakable Wilkinson, were as corrupt and disloyal as they were incompetent. Most of the new officers were as ignorant and unprepared as their brethren who remained in the militia. According to General Winfield Scott, many of the new officers appointed after 1808 were either indifferent or positively bad: swaggerers, political dependents, or "decayed gentlemen" who were fit for "nothing else."[1] We went into the war with a regular army of 6700 men, officered by old men, or men of petty spirit and petty experience. According to Scott most of them were sunk in sloth and ignorance and many of them ruined by intemperate drinking.

In the earlier campaigns these so-called regulars were little if any better than the militia. We have been frequently regaled by the failure of Van Rensselaer's militia a few miles below Niagara Falls. But we are not so frequently reminded that Smyth and his regulars proved quite as worthless a few miles above that cataract.[2] But the regulars remained in service long enough to learn, and therefore improved as they grew in experience. Under capable new leaders like Brown

[1]Scott's *Memoirs*, I, pp. 31, 35. See also K. C. Babcock's *Rise of American Nationality*, p. 78.

[2]See L. L. Babcock's *The War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier*, pp. 59–76.

and Ripley and Winfield Scott,[1] they became highly disciplined soldiers. At Chippewa and Lundy's Lane and thereafter throughout the war, they proved themselves a match for the best British troops. It was the gallantry of this new Regular Army with the brilliant exploits of our Navy that redeemed something of the general disgrace of the war. The history of our modern Regular Army really begins with the War of 1812. Since then it has never failed to give a good account of itself. It found a place in the pride and gratitude of the people just when the general failure of the national militia had filled them with humiliation and contempt.

4

After the War of 1812, the War Department became the headquarters of this new regular establishment. Its leaders became the sole advisers of the Secretary of War. They were practical soldiers. They were not critical historians. To them the lesson of the war was simple. The militia was utterly worthless. They had no knowledge of Washington's remedy. In their minds, there could be no effective defence except with professional soldiers.

But while Madison remained President, this new military gospel made little headway. In his own mind there was a vivid record of the past. He had sat in the Constitutional Convention. He knew the meaning of the militia clauses of the Constitution better than any other man. He had been a member of the House when the Boudinot Bill was introduced. He had shared in every debate on the militia and had voted on the passage of the Act of 1792. He had opposed Washington in many things, but he retained his friendship and con-

[1]In forming his brigade in this new army, General Scott had acted as drill sergeant. He had but one copy of the new drill regulations and his officers were undisciplined and untrained. He therefore formed them into a squad and gave them squad drill. He then stood over them while they gave the same lesson to their men. This he did day after day, enforcing the most rigid discipline—partly by the authority of his commission, but principally by his six feet and four inches of resolute, vigorous, "hard-boiled" manhood. Scott's personality molded the discipline of the new professional army, much as Steuben's personality had molded the discipline of Washington's Citizen Army at Valley Forge.

fidence and had always understood and accepted his military views. As President, Madison had repeatedly urged the adoption of Washington's "well-regulated militia." He was not misled by the false issues of the war. He knew that we had suffered defeat solely because Washington's military policy had not been adopted.

This policy is restated with exceptional clarity in Madison's last annual message, as follows:

> As a subject of the highest importance to the national welfare, I must again earnestly recommend to the consideration of Congress a reorganization of the militia on a plan which will form it into classes according to the periods of life more or less adapted to military services. An efficient militia is authorized and contemplated by the Constitution and required by the spirit and safety of free government. The present organization of our militia is universally regarded as less efficient than it ought to be made, and no organization can be better calculated to give to it its due force than a classification which will assign the foremost place in the defence of the country to that portion of its citizens whose activity and animation best enable them to rally to its standard. Besides the consideration that a time of peace is the time when the change can be made with the most convenience and equity, it will now be aided by the experience of a recent war in which the militia bore so interesting a part.

But Madison was the last survivor of the original fathers who had created our government. When he retired from the Presidency, this living, human bond with the past was gone. His successors must rely upon archives and, unfortunately, the official archives of our military policy were lost. Washington's original plan with other military records in the files of Congress and the War Department had been destroyed by fire when the British burned the Capitol in 1814.

5

When Monroe succeeded Madison as President, he made John C. Calhoun his Secretary of War. Calhoun was a young man without military experience or knowledge. As Washington's legacy was not transmitted to him, he drew such mili-

tary wisdom as he could from the leaders of the new regular army, Generals Brown and Winfield Scott.[1] Like Washington, they knew the worthlessness of an unregulated militia. But they proposed an entirely different remedy.

Within four years after President Madison's retirement it became manifest that every trace of our traditional military policy had been forgotten in the War Department. In December, 1820, Secretary Calhoun transmitted an elaborate report on the National Defence to Congress.[2] In presenting his plan, the Secretary said:

> If our liberty should ever be endangered by the military gaining the ascendancy, it will be from the necessity of making those mighty and irregular efforts to retrieve our affairs, after a series of disasters, caused by the want of adequate military knowledge, just as in our physical system a state of the most dangerous excitement and paroxysm follows that of the greatest debility and prostration. To avoid these dangerous consequences, and to prepare the country to meet a state of war, particularly at its commencement, with honor and safety, much must depend on the organization of our military peace establishment, and I have accordingly, in a plan about to be proposed for the reduction[3] of the army, directed my attention mainly to that point, believing it to be of the greatest importance.
>
> To give such an organization, the leading principles in its formation ought to be, that at the commencement of hostilities there should be nothing either to new model or to create. The only difference, consequently, between the peace and the war formation of the army, ought to be in the increased magnitude of the latter, and the only change in passing from the former to the latter should consist in giving to it the augmentation which will then be necessary.

In the above peroration, Mr. Calhoun stated the main objects of sound military organization in most eloquent terms.

[1] See *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, Vol. VII, pp. 446-7.

[2] See *American State Papers*, "Military Affairs," II, 189-196.

[3] Earlier in the year, the Secretary had been directed to report a plan for the reduction of the enlisted strength of the regular artillery and infantry from 12,000 to 6000.

Few statesmen have presented the true military objectives of a modern republic more accurately or more concisely. In reading this statement we are prepared for a new presentation of some simple, scientific, and economical organization such as Steuben's Continental Militia. And how perfectly the Baron's plan would have met the requirements of the United States in 1820. By that year the peace strength of his Continental Militia or National Guard would have been more than 60,000 men, and it would be expansible to a war strength of 120,000 within ten days. It is manifest that Steuben's organization would meet all the requirements of Secretary Calhoun's concisely stated premises. And if Steuben's plan had been adopted a regular army of 6000 men would have been larger than necessary. In a minor emergency, such as an Indian War, the army could be augmented easily and promptly by systematic details from the militia as Knox had proposed.

But when we read the Secretary's plan we find a complete anti-climax. He proposes nothing but the dilution of his little Regular Army by absorbing large numbers of raw recruits. On a peace footing, it is to comprise 6391 infantry and artillery. If a minor emergency should come these are to be increased to 11,558. In a serious emergency they would be increased to 19,035 officers and men. On a peace footing, his infantry companies would have the imposing strength of 37 men each. On the full war footing each company of 37 men would be expanded into two companies each with a strength of 77 men, by the process of "doubling the battalions." This process is described as follows:

> The mode of doubling the battalion is simply to form a battalion of each half battalion, a division of each platoon, a platoon of each section, etc., and fill up their ranks to the proper number, with a care to place the recruits in the second ranks.

As, after this process, there would be only nineteen old soldiers in each company, there would be fifty-eight recruits to be placed "with a care" in the second ranks. This would seem to demand the exercise of considerable ingenuity as well as "care."

This is the first official appearance of the "expansible standing army" plan which still persists after more than a century. As presented by Mr. Calhoun, it was totally inadequate from the standpoint of the sound principles stated in his preamble. If he expected to reënforce it from the unregulated militia of the day, it was entirely too small to meet the requirements of national defence. On the other hand, if backed by a "well-regulated" militia, no war dilution would have been necessary and the skeletonized organization was therefore absurd. Its companies would be too small for effective peace training, and such limited efficiency as they might acquire in peace time would be completely destroyed on mobilization.

And there was another remarkable feature in Mr. Calhoun's scheme of army reduction. In compliance with the desire of Congress, he proposed to reduce the enlisted strength of the artillery and infantry from about 12,000 to about 6000. But by virtue of his proposed skeletonized organization, he found means of accomplishing this without recommending any reduction in the number of commissioned officers.[1]

The Scott-Brown-Calhoun conception of an expansible standing army became orthodox in the Regular Army after 1820. It completely displaced the Washingtonian military policy. In 1876, General Sherman worked out a modern improvement of Calhoun's scheme. But he suggested a much greater coefficient of dilution. He proposed to expand a peace-time regular army of about 27,000 men into a war army of about 213,000 men.[2]

But the expansible standing army was not favored by all

[1]See Appendix II.

[2]General Upton favored the same system but was not quite so expansive as General Sherman. In his *Armies of Asia and Europe*, he proposed to expand his regular army from a peace strength of about 23,000 to a war strength of about 140,000 men. As we shall see in Chapter XXIV, General Upton undertook his historical researches in order to find support for this military policy. He discovered the Calhoun Plan of 1820 and endorsed it highly. But his book gives no trace of the alternative military policy proposed by Washington, Steuben, Knox, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison.

military authorities even in General Sherman's day. In a letter dated October 19, 1876, General Winfield S. Hancock wrote as follows:

> This theory, false in principle, has always failed in practice. It involves just that lack of power so much complained of during peace—companies too small for instruction, drill, and other duty—and when war comes in lieu of filling out the skeleton, we take entire new organizations from the volunteers or militia. Our standing army should be a small, complete, compact, vigorous, healthy body, always in a thorough state of discipline and instruction, serving as a model and a standard for the national forces, and not preserved as a skeleton into which it is expected to infuse vitality, activity, and knowledge at a moment when an emergency occurs.[1]

6

If the decade following the War of 1812 marks a new point of view with reference to the regular army, it also marks a revolution in the attitude of the government toward military education. As originally conceived by Steuben and Washington, it was the primary function of a military academy to train leaders for the militia and to diffuse military knowledge among the people. This also was the conception of Adams and Jefferson. President Madison made it one of the principal features of his administration policy.

In his message of December 5, 1810, Madison urged additional professorships at West Point and "the establishment of an additional academy at the seat of government or elsewhere." Here he advocated two national military academies at a time when the commissioned strength of the regular army was but little more than three hundred. In 1811, he again reminded Congress:

> of the importance of these military seminaries, which, in every event, will form a valuable and frugal part of the military establishment.

In 1815, after the close of the war, in connection with renewed recommendations for a well-regulated militia, he urged:

[1] See *Senate Report, No. 555, Third Session, 45th Congress*, p. 112.

An enlargement of the Military Academy and the establishment of others in other sections of the country.

But with the development of Calhoun's expansible standing army, the whole theory of military education was changed. The substitution of Winfield Scott for Steuben involved a momentous revolution. Most of Washington's military graduates would return to civil life. Only a few would become professional soldiers. But now these rôles were to be reversed. West Point was given a narrower mission. It now became her first task to train second lieutenants for Calhoun's expansible standing army. The popular diffusion of military knowledge became a neglected side issue.

7

The official record of Washington's military policy was destroyed by fire in 1814. But strange to say it was rediscovered a few years later. In 1827, the Reverend Jared Sparks was authorized by Judge Bushrod Washington to publish selections from the Washington papers, then at Mount Vernon. These papers comprised Washington's own voluminous writings as well as letters to him from various eminent men. Sparks therefore prepared two separate works for publication: one the *Writings of Washington*, containing selections from the General's own compositions; the other, *The Correspondence of the American Revolution*, containing selections from Washington's "Letters Received."

In the course of his editorial labors, Sparks finally came to the records of the remarkable conference on military policy at Washington's headquarters at Newburg in 1783. First among these papers was the letter from Alexander Hamilton, requesting the Commander-in-chief to favor Congress with his "sentiments at large" upon the defence of the new-born republic. This important document, Sparks omitted from *The Correspondence of the American Revolution*. In his *Writings of Washington*, Sparks included Washington's letter calling upon Baron Steuben for his "sentiments" upon a peace establishment. But he omitted similar letters to Washington's other military advisers.

When Sparks came to the replies from Washington's advisers, his omissions and his selections are even more remarkable. He omitted the replies of Steuben, Knox, Rufus Putnam, and Pickering, in which these officers gave their carefully considered plans for forming a "well-regulated" militia. He included, however, the replies of Governor Clinton and General Huntington—the only two that offered no useful contribution upon that important subject. And finally Sparks omitted Washington's own "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment"—one of the most highly constructive state papers that Washington ever wrote. Taking the *Washington Papers* as a whole, Sparks omitted from them every trace of Washington's military policy. He published those two papers only that were not inconsistent with the new Calhoun-Scott policy of an expansible standing army.[1]

And how could a literary parson like the Reverend Jared Sparks have exercised such highly critical discrimination? There was a most remarkable method in his editorial madness! When Sparks made his selections, the ancient militia institution was completely discredited. And this discredit, sustained by an uncritical interpretation of history, was the main support of a new official military policy. Perhaps Sparks felt that he was doing the fame of Washington a service in thus expurgating such damning evidences of military heresy. Or perhaps, in making his selections from Washington's purely military papers, the reverend editor sought and obtained expert military advice at the War Department.

[1]John Marshall also had access to the Washington papers while preparing his *Life of Washington* (1804–1807). In his Volume IV, page 618, he refers to Washington's recommendations on military policy at the close of the Revolution. In this connection Marshall says: "His [Washington's] letter on this occasion, which it is presumed was deposited in the Archives of State, will long deserve the attention of those to whom the interests of the United States may be confided. On a well regulated and disciplined militia during peace, his strongest hope of securing the future tranquillity, dignity and respectability of his country were placed; and his sentiments on this subject were entitled to the more regard, as a long course of severe experience had enabled him to mark the total incompetency of the existing system to the great purposes of national defence."

Thus, since 1807, Washington's views on military policy have always been accessible to any thorough investigator who really wanted to find them.

But whether due to ignorance or to design, the practical result of Sparks's editorial labors was the suppression of a highly important chapter of American history. Our military history without Washington's "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" and the accompanying papers is about as complete as our political history would be without the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

8

Between the War of 1812 and the War with Mexico there were a number of conflicts with various Indian tribes. The regular army was too small and too widely scattered to furnish enough troops for the expeditious conduct of these operations. It was therefore reënforced by large numbers of the existing "ill-regulated" militia called, as usual, for short periods of service. Under these conditions these Indian campaigns were unduly prolonged. One of them, the so-called Florida War, lasted for five years. The result was a great disturbance on the frontiers and an unnecessary expenditure of public money. This might have been avoided by a material permanent increase of the regular army. But it might also have been avoided by "aids" from a "well-regulated" militia such as Knox, Washington, Jefferson, and Madison had proposed.

One of these Indian Wars will detain us for a moment, because it will give us a glimpse of two characters who are to figure in a greater military drama later. Among the officers who served in the Black Hawk War in 1832 were Captain Abraham Lincoln of the Sangamon County Militia and Second Lieutenant Jefferson Davis of the First Regular Infantry. The captain is twenty-three years old this year. The lieutenant is one year older. There is a tradition that these two young officers actually met each other in the course of the campaign. Such an encounter, though not improbable, is not confirmed by any positive record.

But if they did meet, what manner of man would each appear to the other? We may be sure that Captain Lincoln would have looked with frank and generous admiration upon

this dapper young soldier so recently graduated from West Point. Conscious of his own shortcomings, and always eager to learn, how gladly, how docilely, would he have accepted the lieutenant as a teacher. And how would this awkward and uncouth captain of militia appear to the regular? No doubt he would identify the captain as the very caricature of that militia institution which he had been taught to consider beneath contempt. His education had made him a Pharisee among Publicans and Sinners such as these. Back in his consciousness might he not exclaim: "What! That grinning, shuffling gawk, a captain, while I, a trained soldier, am still a second lieutenant!"

It is impossible that these two could have met upon a plane of common understanding. And yet it was in order to establish just that relation that the Military Academy was first conceived. From the standpoint of Steuben, Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, Lieutenant Jefferson Davis had been given military knowledge at public expense, in order that he might transmit it to citizen soldiers such as this same Captain Abraham Lincoln. And if the lieutenant had tried this rôle he might have been surprised. He might have found genuine capacity and eagerness to learn under that unpromising exterior. He might have found in Captain Lincoln a tolerable capacity for self-education—even in such abstruse mysteries as infantry drill and company administration.

9

An old letter gives us a glimpse of army life on the eve of the War with Mexico. In May, 1843, Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman, of the Second Artillery, wrote as follows to his brother John:

> Leaving the seasons to look after themselves, I'll try and give you an idea of how our days pass in a garrison like this. Here at Fort Moultrie we have about 250 soldiers, divided into four companies. These are quartered some inside the wall, some outside. All the unmarried officers—eight of us—live inside; all the married, five, outside. This being the headquarters of the regiment, we have the Colonel and his band of about

> fifteen instruments. Every morning at daylight all get up at reveille, attend a drill, either as infantry or artillery, at sunrise; breakfast at seven, have a dress parade at eight, and half an hour after the new guard takes the place of the old one,—a new officer relieving the old one. *After that each one kills time to suit himself till reveille of next morning commences the new routine.* Thus it is every fair day except Sunday, when we have an extra quantity of music, parade and inspection in honor of the day and to keep our men in superfine order at church. *Thus, you see that every day at nine o'clock and after we have nothing to do but amuse ourselves. Some read, some write, some loaf, and some go to the city.* For the latter class a barge is in attendance, going and coming. Although six miles from a city, we have all its advantages, whilst separated from its annoying noises, taxes, and expenses. . . .[1]

This is how young officers prepared themselves for war in the "old army." There were no service schools, no Leavenworth, no War College in those days to interfere with their professional initiative. But Lieutenant Sherman's station was exceptional. He belonged to the artillery—the scientific arm of the service. He served at one of the few four-company posts in the country. There was a band at this post and a city near at hand to give variety to the process of "killing time." The surroundings of the "doughboys" and the cavalry were even less distracting. Most of them were at one- and two-company posts on the Indian frontier. Few of them ever heard the regimental band. They had no barge in attendance and no city to go to. Their place to "kill time" was generally the post trader's store where there was no Eighteenth Amendment.

Two other graduates of West Point are worth a glance in the early 'forties. William R. McKee, of the class of 1829, and Henry Clay, of the class of 1831, the son of a distinguished father, have left the army and are now living at Lexington, Kentucky. They, with a few others, are in the status that Madison had in mind for the great majority of his military graduates. They too are preparing for war and are recognized by their neighbors as fit to lead. They will

[1] *Sherman Letters*, pp. 22-23. The italics are mine.

organize the Second Kentucky Volunteers. We will meet them again at Monterey and Buena Vista.

And now, since 1835, our friend Lieutenant Jefferson Davis also has left the regular service. He is now a planter down in Mississippi. He has become the unwelcome son-in-law of Colonel Zachary Taylor. He too is about to broaden his contact with citizen soldiers. He will organize and lead the "Mississippi Rifles" when the call comes. He too will arrive at Buena Vista where, amongst other trophies, he will win a hearty handclasp of reconciliation from that "rough and ready" father-in-law of his.

CHAPTER XIV

MEXICO

I

In the Mexican War we suffered again from the policy of short enlistments that prolonged the Revolutionary War. The volunteers were called on the 13th of May, 1846. Most of them were enlisted for one year. After a few months of training on the border, they took part in the campaign in northern Mexico and served brilliantly at Monterey.

The spring of 1847 opened with General Scott's capture of Vera Cruz and his advance on the city of Mexico. His whole force was little more than ten thousand men, among whom about half were volunteers. In the midst of his campaign and when he was about halfway to his objective, the one-year service approached its conclusion. This made it necessary for him to discharge his volunteers and to wait several months for reënforcements. This was a most critical situation. Not only was his advance checked but he was left with depleted forces, far from his base in a difficult country. But Santa Anna, the Mexican commander, was unable to profit by his opportunity. His battle with Zachary Taylor's volunteers at Buena Vista had all but destroyed his army. Scott was therefore permitted to wait for his reënforcements. And when they came he carried his campaign to brilliant victory.

The short enlistments during the Revolution were due to faults of legislation, but in the Mexican War, the Executive was to blame. In the Act of May 13, 1846, the President was authorized to call volunteers,

> to serve twelve months after they shall have arrived at the place of rendezvous, or to the end of the War, unless sooner discharged, according to the time for which they shall have been mustered into service.

Here Congress authorized the President to muster the men for "twelve months" or "for the War" at his discretion. Instead of exercising this discretion and calling them for the war, the War Department circular calling the volunteers cited both options and thus left the discretion to the individual men. The same men and many more, if necessary, would have enlisted "for the War" in the first instance. But having enlisted with the option of discharge at the end of one year, they insisted upon their rights under the enlistment contract. Here a wise Congressional policy was defeated by unintelligent executive action.

2

That the War Department should have made such an inexcusable blunder indicates some defect in its organization, some fundamental lack of coöperation between the civil and the military power. And indeed, such a mistake could not occur to-day.

In the present organization of our government, the President exercises his command of the army directly and solely through the Secretary of War. The principal assistant of the Secretary of War is a general officer of the army who bears the title of Chief of Staff. This title suggests this officer's powers as well as his duties. He issues orders to the army and its parts not in his own name but in the name of his civil superior. On the other hand he is the responsible military adviser of his civilian chief. He holds his office not by virtue of his rank but at the pleasure of his chief. The President and the Secretary of War are thus fully responsible for his selection and are therefore morally bound to consider his technical advice.

But this sensible organization of our military power is of comparatively recent origin. It was not adopted until 1903, under the influence of a great Secretary of War, Elihu Root. From shortly after the War of 1812, through the Civil War and until after the Spanish-American War, the President exercised his military command through two channels. Under this old theory, the Secretary of War was supposed to administer the War Department and to conduct its fiscal

operations. The instruction, discipline, and command of the troops were the domain of the Commanding General of the Army.

But, unfortunately, administration and command cannot be separated in this way. The practical result was constant conflict between these two authorities. Possessed of actual political power, the Secretary continually encroached upon the presumed prerogative of the general. If the general resented this, the Secretary ceased to consult him and got his advice elsewhere. The result was a military commander without authority and a civil superior without responsible military advice. And the difficulty was aggravated by the fact that the commanding general served by virtue of his army rank and not at the pleasure of the President. A new President might therefore be called upon to accept an appointee of a hostile administration as one of his most important advisers. This was a most serious defect in our national organization. It accounts for much of our past unpreparedness in time of peace and for many of our disasters and failures in time of war.

3

This was the situation at the outbreak of the War with Mexico. The new President, James K. Polk, was a Democrat, as was William L. Marcy, his Secretary of War. But the general commanding the army was Winfield Scott, a Whig, and a hero of the War of 1812. This created an embarrassing situation at the start. The administration was engineering a war that would make the country, and especially the Senate, a little safer for the Democratic Party.

Under the present system, the President could have selected a Democrat, or at least a political neutral, as his Chief of Staff. This would have assured him a military assistant whose mind would travel approximately in the same direction as his own. But in 1846 the President's only authorized source of military wisdom was a Whig. Any Whig would be bad enough, but Scott was one of the most

dangerous Whigs in the country. He himself was Presidential timber.[1]

And the Whig Party knew how to play the cards of military glory. Only six years before, with the cry of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," they had driven the Democratic cohorts to defeat. This was a serious complication in the plans for a Democratic war. With Scott as commander, victory would almost certainly nominate a new Whig President. It is therefore not unnatural that there was misunderstanding between the civil and military authority. At the very time the Volunteer Bill passed, this quarrel was on. The President was for a campaign from the Rio Grande toward Monterey. He would thus occupy his new Democratic States-to-be. General Scott was for a campaign from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico. When the general's plan was disapproved he was indignant. He informed the President that if a soldier's plans were not supported by the administration, success could not be expected. This was on the 27th of May. Four days later General Scott was told that he need not go to Mexico. With this quarrel on in the War Department, it is not surprising that, between them, the Secretary of War and the commanding general overlooked the enlistment clause in the Proclamation for Volunteers. No doubt each blamed the other. If so, both were right.

General Gaines was next in rank to General Scott but he was too old and feeble to take the field. So Zachary Taylor was left in command of the Army of Occupation in Texas, which was now to become the Army of Invasion. He too was a Whig. But he was hardly Presidential timber. He had no national reputation. He was a rough and ready colonel of regular infantry, commanding by brevet. The conduct of the administration's Democratic war could apparently be left to him.

But Taylor won the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. A little later, when the volunteers joined him, he drilled them and then captured Monterey. He also captured the

[1]Scott had been a candidate for the Whig nomination in 1840. He received the Whig nomination in 1852, and was defeated by the Democratic nominee, Franklin Pierce.

popular imagination. And now the administration had a new Whig menace. It sought to solve it by making Thomas H. Benton a Democratic lieutenant general who would thus outrank all the Whig generals and capture all the military glory. But this commendable plan couldn't be worked through Congress. In the meantime Taylor had become much more dangerous than Scott. It was then decided to let one Whig general cancel another. Scott was therefore permitted to carry out his original plan of an advance from Vera Cruz. This would draw troops from Taylor and hold him to inactivity on the line of the Rio Grande. But instead of falling back toward the north, Taylor marched further south. With about 4500 volunteers and 500 regulars he met an army of twenty thousand Mexicans at Buena Vista. After three days of fierce fighting he won one of the most brilliant victories in our annals. In spite of the most careful precautions, a victorious Democracy had nominated another Whig President of the United States. If Clausewitz's concept that *war is a phase of politics* had not entered the American mind in 1847, it was quite generally appreciated that political intrigue is a most active element in the conduct of war.

4

The conflict between General Scott and Secretary Marcy was a natural consequence of a false theory of military command that prevailed for many years. This theory was stated in the Army Regulations of 1834, as follows:

> The military establishment is placed under the orders of the major general commanding in chief in all that regards its discipline and military control. Its fiscal arrangements properly belong to the Treasury Department under the direction of the Secretary of War.

This regulation, with minor changes in phraseology, was in force until 1903, when the office of commanding general was abolished and was replaced by the new office of the chief of staff.[1]

[1]The final form of this regulation as it existed in 1903 is as follows: "The Military Establishment is under the orders of the Commanding

Under this regulation, General Scott claimed that he commanded the army subject only to the superior authority of the President and that, in the exercise of this command, he was in no sense subordinate to the Secretary of War. This view was transmitted by Scott to his successors and was an endless source of friction and inefficiency. It is most unfortunate that he was not endowed with sufficient wisdom to solve the problem in the only possible way, by frank and cheerful submission, as one of his successors did nearly forty years later.

When General Schofield became commanding general upon the death of General Sheridan in 1885, he recognized clearly that under our form of government he could not have, and ought not have, any effective right of command except such as the President, through the Secretary of War, might freely delegate to him. He therefore relinquished any attempt to command by virtue of his military rank and requested the President and the Secretary of War to use him purely as their military adviser and Chief of Staff. This offer was gladly accepted and thereafter the superior civil authority consulted him and trusted him. The result was that Schofield was the only commanding general of the army from the War of 1812 to the close of the Spanish-American War who ever exercised effective command of the army in time of peace.

In 1866, General Grant insisted upon the same independent right of command that Scott had asserted, and made General Sherman the president of a board to draw proper regulations for his office. Later, when Grant was President, Sherman insisted upon the same powers that General Grant had claimed. The Secretary of War objected to this and Grant, now President, and viewing the matter from a broader point of view, sustained the Secretary of War. General Sherman met the situation as Scott had done before him. He left Washington and established an impotent headquarters of the army elsewhere. There he exercised no real influence and was almost completely ignored. The problem was finally solved, as

General of the Army in that which pertains to its discipline and military control. The fiscal affairs of the Army are conducted by the Secretary of War through the several Staff Departments."

proposed by Elihu Root, in the Act of 1903. Under that law, the commanding general was replaced by a chief of staff who was to serve as the immediate subordinate of the Secretary of War.

If General Scott had had the vision to anticipate General Schofield in the rational solution of this problem, the consequences must have been most momentous. It was this faulty theory of higher command, so tenaciously asserted and fostered by Scott, that accounted for much of President Lincoln's difficulty in the conduct of the Civil War. Here lies the germ of the friction that was to arise between Stanton and McClellan. But such subordination was not in Scott's character or training. He was always unwilling to subordinate himself to the Secretary of War. And, indeed, submission to the President himself was not always easy for him. The Diary of John Quincy Adams shows that throughout the last year of his Presidency, he was burdened and harassed by the disrespect, open insubordination, and pernicious political activity of General Scott.[1]

5

An old letter gives us a glimpse of the volunteers as they joined Zachary Taylor's little army on the Mexican frontier. The writer is Second Lieutenant George Gordon Meade of the Topographical Engineers who graduated at West Point in 1843. Meade was then serving on General Taylor's staff. On the 27th of May, 1846, he writes:

> The volunteers continue to pour in, and I regret to say I do not see it with much satisfaction. They are perfectly ignorant of discipline, and most restive under restraint. They are in consequence a most disorderly mass, who will give us, I fear, more trouble than the enemy. . . .

[1]When President Adams placed General Macomb in command of the Army, Scott refused to obey his orders on the ground that he was senior to Macomb by virtue of his *brevet* rank. When the President overruled this contention, Scott applied for a long leave of absence in order to prepare an appeal to Congress over the President's head. The general, however, finally decided to accept the ruling of the superior civil authority, when Old Hickory became President the following year.

There is no use in giving them orders; they will not obey them, and they will in consequence waste more ammunition in a few weeks' idleness at this place than the regulars wasted since their arrival at Corpus Christi last summer, including both battles. This is the miserable economy of our government. It will not keep a regular army in proportion to our population and frontier, and equivalent to the wants of the country, for fear of the expense, yet six months of this volunteer force will cost as much as five years for a regular force of equal size.

Had the United States had in service twenty thousand men, instead of five thousand (our present army), it could have sent a force of good, disciplined soldiers, to this country, who would have followed up the results of our victories, and ere this the war would be finished. As it is, we shall have some twenty or thirty thousand irregulars, whose usefulness may well be doubted, from past experience and present appearances, and at an expense sufficient to have maintained the regular force for many years. . . .

The middle of August, after the volunteers had had several months of training, Lieutenant Meade again writes from the Camp at Camargo:

My only apprehensions as to success arise from the constitution of our own force. I fear our volunteers will not only prove inefficient themselves, but will prove a serious obstacle to our efficiency, by impeding our progress. . . .

A month later the volunteers took part with the regulars in the siege and capture of Monterey. Their behavior was better than Meade had expected and he frankly admits it. On December 2, 1846, he writes:

The volunteers have in this war, on the whole, behaved better than I believed they would, and infinitely better than they did in the Florida War, under my own eye. Still, without a modification of the manner in which they are officered, they are almost useless in offensive war. They are sufficiently well drilled for practical purposes, and are, I believe, brave, and will fight as gallantly as any men, but they are a set of Goths and Vandals, without discipline, laying waste the country wherever we go, making us a terror to innocent people, and

if there is any energy or spirit in the Mexicans, will finally rouse the people against us, who now are perfectly neutral. . . .

This is a true picture and the cause is the utter incapacity of their officers to control them or command respect. The officers (many of whom are gentlemen and clever fellows) have no command over their men. They know they are in service for only twelve months; at the end of that time they will return to their homes, when these men will be their equals and companions, as they had been before, and in consequence they dare not attempt to exercise any control over them. Then, for the most part, they are as ignorant of their duties as the men, and conscious of their ignorance, they feel they cannot have the command over their people that the regular officers do over their soldiers.

Such was Lieutenant Meade's impression of volunteer troops hastily drawn from an "ill-regulated" militia. As an educated military expert he proposed the following interesting plan of reform:

Now, the remedy I would propose would be to attach to every regiment of volunteers a colonel, a lieutenant colonel, ten captains and twenty sergeants, with two hundred men from the regular army. Let these officers have the brevet rank of their respective grades, so as to keep them in the army. Let the colonel be taken from the lieutenant colonels, and the captains from the lieutenants. The army can well spare these officers, for it is organized for such a purpose. Then in each regiment you would have enough practical knowledge to give a tone to it, and the volunteer regiments would soon be as efficient as regular troops. But, as it is, the generals know no more than the privates, and it is only by attaching regular officers, as staff officers, that they get along at all. . . .

Another young officer, Second Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant of the 4th Infantry, took a more favorable view of the volunteers. In later years, he wrote:[1]

A better army, man for man, probably never faced the enemy than the one commanded by General Taylor in the earliest two

[1]Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 168.

engagements of the Mexican War. The volunteers who followed were of better material, but without drill or discipline at the start. They were associated with so many disciplined men and professionally educated officers, that when they went into engagements it was with a confidence they would not have felt otherwise. They became soldiers almost at once. All these conditions we would enjoy again in case of war.

Of the battle service of the volunteers, he writes:[1]

General Taylor's victory at Buena Vista, February 22d, 23d and 24th, 1847, with an army composed almost entirely of Volunteers who had never been in battle before, and over a vastly superior force, numerically, made his nomination for the Presidency by the Whigs almost a foregone conclusion.

6

Lieutenant Meade's solution of our national military problem is most interesting. He recognized no competent leadership except under professional leaders. In his proposed organization we identify the Calhoun-Scott policy of 1820. This had now become the orthodox creed of the regular army. It did not occur to Lieutenant Meade that these raw volunteers[2] were raw and ill-led solely because they were drawn from an "ill-regulated" militia. It did not occur to him that these same officers and men, had they been drawn from Washington's "well-regulated" militia, would have made a better and more economical war army than the one he proposed.

And the reason is that Lieutenant Meade did not know what Washington meant by a "well-regulated" militia. He

[1]Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 123.

[2]Even after he became Commander of the Army of the Potomac, Meade retained something of his contempt for volunteers. In 1864, according to General Upton, he "refused to let a subaltern of Engineers take a regiment, on the ground that a lieutenant of (*regular*) engineers was of more importance than a Colonel of Volunteers. Being persuaded, through the intercession of a corps commander, to withdraw his opposition, the lieutenant within six months was advanced from a regiment to a brigade, and within a year was leading a cavalry division." (Upton, *Military Policy of the United States*, p. 236.)

had no knowledge of the organized army of the people that the fathers of our nation sought to establish. No such conception was included in the curriculum at West Point. Meade like most, if not all, of his brother officers was ignorant of the military foundations of our national history.

Nor did he realize that the system he proposed was totally impossible in America because it was repugnant to the genius of republican institutions. Such a system might be feasible in Prussia because the people of Prussia were accustomed to the exclusive leadership of a special privileged class. Steuben recognized that the energy and valor of a democracy can be fully mobilized only under democratic leadership. In order to mobilize the muscle and the brawn of a free people, you must also mobilize the brain and the genius of its leaders.

But there is a place for the trained military leader even in an army of the people. At Buena Vista, Colonel McKee and Lieutenant Colonel Henry Clay of the 2d Kentucky Volunteers were killed at the head of their regiment. Among the wounded was Colonel Jefferson Davis of the Mississippi Rifles. All three were graduates of West Point. All three had become citizen soldiers.

For though its light had not been diffused as widely as its founders had planned, and though its primary mission had been all but forgotten, the Military Academy emerges with a new lustre from the War with Mexico. Its war record is given by General Scott as follows:

> I give it as my fixed opinion that but for our graduated cadets the war between the United States and Mexico might, and probably would, have lasted some four or five years, with, in its first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share: whereas in less than two campaigns we conquered a great country and a peace without the loss of a single battle or skirmish.

PART III

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S WAR

CHAPTER XV

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

1

BEFORE the curtain rises on a drama, we are given a list of the characters who are to appear in the play. A word or two as to who they are and whence they come and their kinship to each other frequently prepares us for their place in the coming action. We recognize them when they come on the stage and so the action need not pause while we are given an introduction. Therefore, before we raise the curtain on the tragedy of the Civil War, we may be permitted to pause for a moment to identify a few of the principal characters. The stage will be a crowded one and full of action and our time will be short. It will therefore save time later, to see what some of these people were doing and thinking in the years just before the play begins.

2

Colonel Jefferson Davis came home from the Mexican War a military hero. He has become a prominent leader in politics. He entered the Senate in 1847, a picturesque figure on crutches, still crippled by the wound he got at Buena Vista. Now, since 1853, he is in the cabinet. He is Secretary of War. And there are new war clouds on the horizon. The compromise of 1850 has been a fragile one. In 1854 come the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and then the Dred Scott Decision. Already there is border war in Kansas. Throughout the North, abolitionists are shrieking. Throughout the South are threats of disunion. Will the Union hold? If not, can there be secession without war? On these things all thoughtful Americans, and especially a thoughtful Secretary of War, must ponder deeply. And this secretary is well equipped for such meditations. He is an educated soldier. He knows the

old army. He knows every weakness of our military system. His military outlook has been broadened by his command of Southern volunteers. He is no longer a military Pharisee. Can the Yankees coerce a half million citizen soldiers such as fought in his "Mississippi Rifles" at Buena Vista?

3

Lieutenant General Winfield Scott also is at the War Department. He is still the commanding general of the Army. At least that is his official title and he thinks that he should be permitted to command. But Secretary Davis does not agree with him. He considers himself the supreme head of the military establishment under its commander-in-chief, the President. Under his theory, General Scott is his subordinate and not a coördinate authority.[1] The General protests. He loses his temper and still protests. But the secretary is adamant and, what is more, he is right. He represents the supreme Civil Authority. He holds the actual reins of power. The general therefore leaves Washington and establishes an impotent headquarters elsewhere—part of the time at New York, part of the time at West Point.

This is the situation in the American War Department upon the eve of a great war. With General Scott in Washington there is bad organization. When he leaves Washington, bad organization is replaced by no organization. We have a commanding general without authority and a secretary without responsible military advice. If war should come there will be no war team ready for the War President to drive. His two war horses will not be hitched in tandem, harnessed and

[1]In 1855, General Ethan Allen Hitchcock was on leave of absence. General Scott extended this leave of absence for three months more. The Secretary of War held it up and wrote to General Scott, demanding his reasons for such an act of favoritism, and countermanded the General's order. Scott replied that he had granted the leave because he had a right to do it and was convinced of its propriety, that he was not responsible to the Secretary of War in such cases, and that he would be obliged to the Secretary if, hereafter, in any official communications he might have occasion to address him, he would write in the name of the President of the United States, the only official superior whom he (Scott) recognized. (See *Fifty Years in Camp and Field. Diary of Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock*, edited by W. A. Croffut, pp. 417, 418.)

bridle-wise, as they should be. The new War President will have to ride them bare-back and both at the same time, circus fashion. He'll need long legs, uncommon agility, and good luck or he may tumble between them.

4

Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman resigned from the Army in 1853 to make his fortune in banking. But his business associates failed and fortune did not come. In the late 'fifties he became superintendent of a state military academy down in Louisiana. Like most of his former regular army brethren he sympathized with General Scott in his controversy with the Secretary of War. He considered "Jeff" Davis,[1] as he called him, a rank usurper when he tried to control the military establishment.

Indeed Sherman does not like politicians. He parades this dislike as a token of military virtue. He has a curious idea, rather prevalent then, that war and politics are entirely separate things. He has probably never heard of the Clausewitzian doctrine that war is merely a special form of political action. He has therefore never reflected upon its interesting, and indeed inevitable, corollary that soldiers and generals and armies are merely the instruments through which, under certain conditions, statesmen must attain purely political ends. Early in 1860, he writes[2] to his brother John (then a leader in the House, later in the Senate):

> Disunion would be civil war, and you politicians would lose all charm. Military men would then step on the tapis, and you would have to retire.

A year later, just before he finally leaves Louisiana for the North, he again writes to his brother: "My notion is that this war will ruin all politicians,[3] and that military leaders will direct the events." But in purely military matters, he has a

[1] *Sherman Letters*, pp. 253, 331. [2] *Sherman Letters*, p. 80.

[3] *Sherman Letters*, p. 105. General Sherman never overcame his dislike and distrust of politicians. He especially scorned military men who sought preferment by what was then known as "political pull." With a personal representative, his brother, in the Senate, he was always able to entrust his own fortunes to Providence.

keen eye for fact. His residence in Louisiana has given him an exceptional opportunity for observation. Better than most, he appraises the strength and resolution of the South. He ventures the suggestion that the subjugation of these people will be a major military operation. Indeed, he rather thinks that as many as three hundred thousand men might be necessary before the job is done. For this, for a time, he bears the name of "Crazy Sherman."

5

In 1852, *Captain and Brevet-Colonel Robert E. Lee* became superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point. During the Mexican War Captain Lee had served on the staff of General Scott in Mexico. In this campaign he was General Scott's principal assistant and performed the duties of a modern general staff officer. In this manner he had had experience and responsibility in the conduct of the headquarters of an independent army in the field. Captain Lee was therefore the only American army officer, still in his prime and fit for active field service, who had been prepared by experience for high command in the field. He is a man of exalted character. His exacting service in the Corps of Engineers has kept his intellect awake and keen. In 1855, he is promoted Lieutenant Colonel of the 2d Cavalry and is thus transferred from the staff to the line.

6

Second Lieutenant George B. McClellan graduated at West Point in 1846 and went to Mexico at once. A year later he served at General Scott's headquarters. There he had been an able assistant to Captain Lee. His service had been brilliant and his experience broad for a junior officer. In 1855–1856, having reached the grade of captain, he was sent abroad to observe the operations at Sebastopol and the organization and equipment of the armies of Europe. His report of this journey had been published by order of Congress in 1857.

This European experience was a valuable preparation for an officer who might be called upon to organize new armies on a large scale. But Captain McClellan did not return from

Europe with any material knowledge of the organization of high command, or of the art of troop leading on a large scale, or of the methods or purposes of general staff education, or of the functions or methods of a modern general staff, or of the relation of the political aims of a modern state to the conduct of its armies in the field. These higher manifestations of military organization were fully developed in Europe but were not to be found by even the most careful observer of the armies of England, France, Austria, Russia, or Sardinia. They were not visible on the surface even in Prussia. Indeed they were not to be revealed to the world until the battle of Königgrätz a few years later. In the meantime most of the practical soldiers of Europe, when they heard rumors of them, regarded them as the vagaries of a Prussian military pedant by the name of Moltke.[1] The "war-trained" leaders of Austria and France laughed at Moltke's "school-bred" leaders.

In 1857, shortly after his return from Europe, Captain McClellan entered civil life. His gifts of organization and administration brought him brilliant success in this broader field. In 1857 he became chief engineer and, the following year, vice-president of the Illinois Central Railway. In 1860 he became president of the St. Louis & Cincinnati Railway with his headquarters at Cincinnati.

7

Second Lieutenant Thomas Jonathan Jackson, a classmate of McClellan's, had also served in Mexico. After the war he found little profit or pleasure in the routine life of the old army. He was a queer, eccentric individual with little taste or talent for the agreeable art of "killing time." Indeed, he carried his eccentricity so far that he deliberately resigned from the regular army in order to have a chance to study military art. Early in the 'fifties he settled down at the Vir-

[1]But the vital germs of this same Prussian military wisdom were included in Steuben's plan of 1784 as approved by Washington. (See Chapter VII.) Moltke had developed the great Frederick's methods to meet the needs of Prussian autocracy. Steuben had adapted the same methods to the needs of a modern republic. But Steuben's legacy had been lost with Washington's.

ginia Military Institute at Lexington, Virginia. He has become professor of natural and experimental philosophy (Physics) and instructor of artillery. Here he devoted his leisure to the study of Presbyterian theology and Napoleon's Campaigns. He did not merely read the story of the campaigns as most readers do. He studied as fervently as he prayed. He studied and mastered Napoleon's technique and practical business methods in the field. He studied just how he wrote his orders and how they were transmitted through the various elements of his command; just how he made and used his military maps; just how he conducted his marches; just how he used his artillery; just how he employed his cavalry in combat; just how he used it to secure information or to screen his army; just how he conducted his reconnaissances; just how he established his outposts and his advanced guards; just how he supplied his men and stimulated their morale; just how he protected his supplies from the enemy. In short, he studied the technical, practical business methods of conducting war. He had been taught little or none of this while a cadet at West Point. He could acquire none of it in the routine service of the old army. Now, through his systematic self-education at Lexington, Virginia, Stonewall Jackson has become the first American to graduate from a modern war college. It is true that he was at once the faculty and the class. But no war college ever had a better curriculum or a higher percentage of distinguished alumni. Thus at the end of the 1850's, Stonewall Jackson is the only man in America who is scientifically prepared for the conduct of modern warfare on a large scale. But there is only one Stonewall Jackson. Can a single trained soldier tip the scales toward either side? Perhaps. There was only one Baron Steuben at Valley Forge. Yet he made the Continental Army what it was. Without him, could there have been Monmouth, or Stony Point or Cowpens, or Yorktown?

And Professor Jackson was not the only West Pointer at the V.M.I. The superintendent, Colonel Francis H. Smith, was an alumnus of the class of 1833, and Major William Gilham of the class of 1840 was also of the faculty. And indeed the presence of these three educated soldiers at Lexington, Vir-

ginia, is a most significant phenomenon. The institution was founded by the state in 1839 to train officers for its militia. Nor was this merely a perfunctory mission. When the corner stone of a new barrack building was laid on July 4, 1850, the orator of the day referred to the portentous war cloud that was then forming in the North and emphasized the maxim "In peace prepare for war."[1] For two decades the Virginia Military Institute was definitely training officers who were to be used when the Army of Northern Virginia should be created out of the Southern militia. This attitude is significant and was to have a powerful influence later. When the war came it came as a surprise to the North. But many thoughtful men in the South had foreseen it and were making material preparations for it. Here in Virginia was one military academy which was *diffusing* military knowledge in the militia. Here, one military seminary was doing for one state what Washington, Steuben, Jefferson, and Madison wanted military academies to do for the whole nation.[2] The mighty military energies released in this limited field suggest what might have come from the larger plan. Here we have three graduates of West Point preparing the way for one of the world's greatest armies—an army composed solely of citizen soldiers.

Later Professor Jackson obtained a furlough[3] from the Institute. During all of his military service he retained his professorship as his permanent status. As major general and lieutenant general in the Confederate Army he was

[1]Smith, *History of Virginia Military Institute*, p. 131.

[2]Of the graduates of the V. M. I., 823 became officers in the Confederate Army. The alumni of the Citadel of South Carolina also furnished 193 officers. Norwich University, of Northfield, Vermont, furnished 436 officers to the Union Army.

[3]In October, 1861, Jackson received a circular from the Board of Visitors reminding him that the Institute, which had been temporarily closed, would reopen in the following January. Jackson, who was then commanding an infantry brigade at Centreville, replied as follows:

GENTLEMEN:

Your circular of the 9th instant has been received, and I beg leave to say in reply that I only took the field from a sense of duty, and the obligation that brought me into service still retains me in it, and will probably continue to do so as long as the war shall last. At the close of the hostilities I desire to assume the duties of my

thus a citizen soldier furloughed from this school. His chair at Lexington was retained for him until his furlough was terminated by a soldier's death.

8

But fate is not to be accused of absolute partiality for the South. While Professor Jackson is sitting at the feet of John Knox and Napoleon, another West Pointer enters a post-graduate school. *Captain Ulysses S. Grant*, late lieutenant 4th Infantry, is to complete his education in the hard school of adversity. He became a captain in 1854. But too much "killing time" has not been good for him. His commanding officer has unwittingly won the gratitude of posterity by forcing the captain to resign. He also is to swim for a while in the main current of American life. He has tried to earn a living for his family but without conspicuous success. His farming has not been profitable. He has earned a little ready money hauling cordwood to St. Louis, where he cools his heels waiting for customers at the street corner. Perhaps, on a very cold day, he may step through yonder swinging doorway in quest of inner warmth and solace. If so, we must forgive him. It was not unconstitutional then. Later he moves to Galena, where he clerks in his father's store. It is openly asserted on the Dent side of the family, and not strenuously denied in Clan Grant, that Ulysses is not much of a success. A little later he will go down to Springfield to help muster in the Illinois volunteers. Governor Yates will see him there and find him useful. He too will join Washington and Nathanael Greene and Stonewall Jackson in the great company of American citizen soldiers.

chair, and accordingly request that, if consistent with the interest of the Institute, the action of the Board of Visitors may be such as to admit of my return upon the restoration of peace.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
T. J. Jackson
Prof. Nat. & Exp. Phil., V.M.I.

In response to this letter, the Board of Visitors extended Professor Jackson's furlough indefinitely. (Smith, *History of the Virginia Military Institute*, p. 138.)

9

In the year 1854, down in Tennessee, we meet one *Nathan Bedford Forrest.* He is thirty-three years old this year. He follows a business which, though necessary in his neighborhood, carries little social distinction with it. He is a successful trader in human cattle. In short, he is an excellent judge of man-flesh. He is a busy, forceful man among men. He has had little time or thirst for self-education. He can write a promissory note if you are not particular about the spelling —and will pay it. Do any of his neighbors suspect that there is burning genius in this rough, unlettered man? Can it be that ten years from now he will be one of the famous cavalry leaders of history; one who will purge military science of its pedantry; one who will shuck it down to its hard inner nubbin? FIGHT!![1]

10

Down in that region which we Illinoisans call Egypt there is a handsome, swarthy, black-haired, black-eyed lawyer and politician who will bear watching. His name is *John Alexander Logan.* He was just past twenty when he went to the Mexican War as a lieutenant of volunteers. He was a Douglas Democrat in the 'fifties. He had no use for Black Republicans and was unreconciled at first when Lincoln was elected. Indeed, he thinks it might be just as well for Egypt to secede from the Yankee part of the state and join the Confederacy. But he finally goes with Douglas. After Sumter, he organizes a regiment of Egyptian Volunteers. Two years later he commands a division in the Vicksburg campaign. His victorious commander says that Logan is one of the best division commanders in the Union Army, regular or no regular, and "equal to a much higher command."[2] But this is not so strange when we consider it. Dame Nature has been manufacturing generals on her own account, and for her own purposes, ever since the Lower Paleolithic and probably longer. Schools can mend them or mar them but can't make them.

[1]Forrest spells it "FITE." But it means the same thing.

[2]Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 497.

That is why Washington and Steuben and Hamilton and Jefferson and Madison wanted to *diffuse* military knowledge. Instead of asking the citizens of a republic to come and serve in the ranks of a standing army under professional leaders, they tried to *diffuse* military knowledge among the people's leaders. If they had had their way, it would not have been necessary for Logan to form his Egyptian Volunteer Regiment after war began. Under their plan, it would have been ready, formed and officered, when the call came.

11

In December, 1859, there is a grim pageant at Charlestown, Virginia. Old *John Brown* of Ossawatomie stands with a hempen noose about his neck. He is about to pay the just penalty of a violent outrage against the peace and sovereignty of the Old Dominion. The old man stands fearless and unmoved. In order to maintain the majesty of the law, Governor Wise has assembled fifteen hundred Virginia troops to witness this act of Justice. These troops are paraded about the scaffold. They will stand there rigid when the trap is sprung. Among them is a detachment of boy soldiers from Lexington. The infantry of the V.M.I. is commanded by Major William Gilham. Its artillery, armed with two howitzers, is commanded by Major Thomas Jonathan Jackson.[1] And what is the burden of Professor Jackson's prayer tonight after this grim portent? We do not know. But we do know that later he prayed with all his soul that Virginia should not leave the Union.

12

Captain Abraham Lincoln of Sangamon County is no longer an officer of the militia. It is now early in 1854. Since we saw him last in the Black Hawk War he has made some progress in self-education. He has built up a tolerable structure upon his foundation of twelve months' intermittent schooling. Shortly after the Black Hawk War he got his first

[1]Smith, *History of the Virginia Military Institute*, pp. 163–171.

real promotion in life. John Calhoun, the county surveyor, offered to appoint him his deputy if he would learn the art of surveying. Lincoln borrowed the textbooks and made himself a competent surveyor in six weeks, rather a remarkable feat in self-culture for an unschooled man who has never studied geometry or trigonometry. A little later he found a volume of Blackstone and commenced the study of law. He has also made some progress in writing correct English with such guidance as he could find in the Bible, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the plays of Shakespeare, the poems of Burns, and the political writings of Jefferson and Clay. He has become a good lawyer. And note this particularly: *He is through with politics*. His one term in Congress was not a success and he was not reëlected. Besides, there is no political issue to interest him since the slavery question was finally settled in the Compromise of 1850. So now he is devoting himself, for the rest of his life, to the law and to self-improvement. Among other things, he has recently mastered the first six Books of Euclid, rather unusual reading for the leisure hours of a backwoods lawyer in his forty-fifth year, and he is studying German. He is still trying to improve his English literary style. His law partner, William H. Herndon, is an educated man, a buyer of books. Lincoln reads Herndon's books as they come in to the office. A book of poems by one Walt Whitman attracts him strangely. He is not a systematic reader like his partner. Indeed Herndon said later:

> Mr. Lincoln was not a general reader, but was a special one. *When he wished to know anything he hunted it up and dug it out to the small, fibrous end of the very tap-root.*[1]

Perhaps with this penetrative gift this man may solve Sphinx-riddles if they come his way. As already mentioned, he is not a systematic reader. He is not a man of systems. He is not a man of formulas. Indeed he has only one: He religiously believes in the wisdom and the virtue of the common people. This formula he will cling to until the end. To him government by the people is not a mere phrase. He is perhaps

[1] The italics are mine.

the most confident, unquestioning disciple that Thomas Jefferson ever had. He is a living refutation of Alexander Hamilton. He trusts and understands the plain people and they will trust and understand him because he is of them. Later, in considering a great problem of war finance, he will seek the advice of his old Menard County friend, Billy Green, who will give him the financial reaction of the plain people at Clary's Grove who are to pay the taxes. He is a teller of tales paid in the coin of loud laughter in taverns and on the street corners. And yet there is a strange, compelling dignity in this awkward, ill-clad man. His closest friends, even Osias M. Hatch and Billy Herndon, his law partner, call him *Mr.* Lincoln. The *Abe* Lincoln of the tales is a myth. After the New Salem days there was no *Abe* Lincoln except behind *Mr.* Lincoln's back. As to his appearance, here it is, as he wrote it himself a few years later:

> If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said that I am in height, six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and grey eyes. No other marks or brands recollected.

Here is a picture of a hard-muscled, wiry, athletic man. He was the champion wrestler of New Salem and is still in training. His only personal vanity is in his stature and his great physical strength. He does not drink or use tobacco —no moral scruples about them—simply does not like them. He is one of Nature's Nazarites. Here is a man who will endure long physical and mental strain. He will do his day's routine, toil with his fellow workers, and then, while they sleep, he will take up his real burden in the watches of the night—hunting up what he "wished to know," and digging "it out to the small fibrous end of the very tap-root."

CHAPTER XVI

LINCOLN AS A MILITARY DICTATOR

1

WHAT would the military situation have been in 1861 if our fathers had adopted Washington's plans for a "well-regulated" militia? By that time Steuben's National Guard would have attained a peace strength of 200,000 men, expansible to 400,000 on mobilization. There would have been a uniform territorial organization throughout the country. There would have been competent leaders and staff officers, both North and South, accustomed to the team play of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. There would have been a War Department competent to control and administer the war organization—because the war organization and the familiar peace organization would have been the same. Further preparedness would have required nothing more than a summons to further field training. Further expansion would have been the simple process of duplicating a familiar pattern in each battalion area.

It might be an interesting speculation to consider how Bull Run might have issued in this altered situation. Suppose Mr. Lincoln had had such a territorial military system and a correctly organized War Department with trained commanders and a competent General Staff!

2

But it is futile to follow this imaginative flight because under these conditions there could have been no Battle of Bull Run. If Washington had succeeded in placing the military resources of the nation in negotiable form, Abraham Lincoln would not have been a War President. The potential odds against secession were much greater in America than they

had been in Switzerland.[1] For every organized battalion in the Cotton States there would have been nine organized battalions in the rest of the Union. For every organized battalion in the states that finally seceded, there would have been four organized battalions in the rest of the Union.[2] We should have too much respect for the intelligence of men like Jefferson Davis to credit them with a deliberate appeal to arms against such odds as these.

In his first message to Congress, Abraham Lincoln recognized the inner nature of the war as an appeal from ballots to bullets. If a disgruntled political minority had not been lured into war by an encouraging prospect of military success, the political issues of 1860 could and must have been settled by normal political means.

Abraham Lincoln is doomed to be a War President because Washington's legacy was not transmitted to him. And now he must "jury rig" a military system before he can begin to wage war.

3

It will aid us to an understanding of President Lincoln's war burden to recall for a moment our entry into the World War. In the spring of 1917, Congress declared war against the German Empire. This action was decisive and was fully endorsed by the American people as inevitable and necessary. Within the next few weeks, under strong pressure of public opinion, laws were passed making all of our man power and all of our weath available to the government for the prosecution of the war. All this was possible because the American people were united and were spiritually and morally prepared for war and because during the preceding three years they had come to appraise the formidable nature of the German War

[1]Secession was attempted in Switzerland in 1847. It failed because the Swiss actually had the military organization which Washington had proposed for the United States.

[2]The total white population of the United States in 1860 was 26,922,537. The total white population in the seven Cotton States was 2,619,113. The total white population of the eleven states that ultimately seceded was 5,447,219. This, however, includes the total population of Virginia. If we deduct the population of West Virginia, the total white population of the Confederate States was not more than 5,000,000.

Power and to understand its threat against liberal civilization.

How different was the situation that confronted Abraham Lincoln when he assumed the office of President! He faced the issues of a war that was all the more terrible because its outlines were vague and uncertain. The immediate objective was obscure and there was no united country to support him. The seven Cotton States had already seceded and had formed a new Confederate government. North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas were about to join them. The border slave states, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, were wavering. Their action would largely depend upon the new President's handling of the critical situation that confronted him in Charleston Harbor. He had had no executive experience. He did not have the means of effective coercion but he was wise enough to see that a premature threat of force would certainly extend the rebellion and alienate a large and influential element in the North. This was the first of many situations in which the President himself must find a homely practical solution and at the same time build up the necessary public opinion to support him. He could not hold Fort Sumter. If he yielded to the demand that it be surrendered to South Carolina he would virtually recognize the fact of secession and separation. If he ordered reënforcements he would drive the wavering states out of the Union. He must do something and yet not commit the overt act of war. He decided, as he expressed it, "to send bread to Anderson." But before this could be done the Confederate batteries had opened fire. This was the real declaration of war. It united the North and gave President Lincoln his first lease of war power. This was indeed his mandate from the people, but neither he nor the people were able to see the magnitude of the task as all intelligent Americans saw it in the spring of 1917. Neither the President nor the people had been schooled by the actual spectacle of war as we all had been when our crisis came in 1917.

4

There was an interval of six weeks between Lincoln's inauguration and the fall of Fort Sumter. During this period a

superficial observer might have accused the new President of hesitation and indecision. But if he moved slowly, it was the watchful caution of a trained wrestler waiting for an opening. This his enemy gave him when that enemy fired the first shot over Charleston Harbor. An aroused and united public opinion was now behind the President and he acted swiftly. He instantly did everything the Constitution authorized and more. The day after Sumter he summoned an extra session of Congress to assemble on July 4th. On the same day he called out 75,000 militia to serve for ninety days.[1] But he did not confine himself to the means legally at his disposal. His broader outlook is given in his own words in a later message to Congress, as follows:

> On the 12th day of April, 1861, the insurgents committed the flagrant act of civil war by the bombardment and capture of Fort Sumter, which cut off the hope of immediate conciliation. Immediately afterwards all the roads and avenues to this city were obstructed, and the capital was put into the condition of a siege. The mails in every direction were stopped, and the lines of telegraph cut off by the insurgents, and military and naval forces, which had been called out by the Government for the defense of Washington, were prevented from reaching the city by organized and combined treasonable resistance in the State of Maryland. *There was no adequate and effective organization for the public defence.* Congress had indefinitely adjourned. There was no time to convene them. It became necessary for me to choose whether, using only the existing means, agencies and processes which Congress had provided, I should let the Government fall into ruin, or whether, availing myself of the broader powers conferred by the Constitution in cases of insurrection, I would make an effort to save it, with all its blessings, for the present age and for posterity.[2]

[1] He could not call it for a longer period. The Act of 1795, which was still in force, prescribed that militia called under its provisions could be retained in service only one month after the assembling of Congress.

[2] *President's Message*, May 27, 1862. The italics are mine.

5

On the 19th of April, the day of the Baltimore riots, the President sealed the ultimate doom of the Confederacy by declaring a blockade of its ports. But effective blockades cannot be established by proclamation and there was no sufficient navy to enforce it. Therefore, the following day he directed the naval authorities to procure, by purchase or by charter, twenty-seven steam vessels and to arm and fit them for blockade duty. At the same time he directed Commodore DuPont to procure and arm such other vessels as might be needed to keep open the waterways to the capital.[1] He also appointed committees of prominent public men to aid the military and naval authorities in the emergency and directed the Secretary of the Treasury to furnish them with the necessary funds from the Treasury upon their demand and without requiring security.

In reporting this decisive action to Congress later, the President said:

> I believe that by these and other similar measures taken in that crisis, some of which were without any authority of law, the Government was saved from overthrow.[2]

But decisive as these measures were, they did not correct the most serious defect in the national situation. As Lincoln stated it in the message above cited: "*There was no adequate and effective organization for the public defence.*" The regular army numbered only 16,000 men.[3] All of this force, except a few hundred men, was scattered in distant western posts. The half-organized militia, just called, was unsuited for active military operations and would be available for only

[1] A few days later he increased the navy by 17,000 men without any legal authority. He also authorized General Scott to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*, whenever necessary, on the line between Philadelphia and Washington.

[2] *President's Message*, May 27, 1862.

[3] Authorized strength January 1, 1860, 18,093 officers and men. Actual strength, 16,367.

ninety days. The situation demanded a war army and the President determined, without any constitutional authority, to create one by proclamation and without waiting for Congressional action. Without fear of responsibility, he here assumed the full powers of a military dictator. He therefore called upon the military authorities to give him a plan for such a force. He was prepared to adopt their proposals and was entitled to expect an adequate plan. Here was an opportunity for the military authorities to correct the shortcomings of a half century of inadequate legislation. No Chief Executive ever met a great emergency more resolutely. No War Department was ever given a greater opportunity.

6

The New Army Plan of 1861 was submitted to President Lincoln on the 3rd of May. Relying upon the professional skill and wisdom of his military advisers, he approved it at once. But it was probably the most inadequate and unscientific scheme that was ever proposed to the head of a great nation upon the outbreak of war. No laboring mountain ever brought forth a more pitiful mouse. It called for 42,000 volunteers and for increasing the regular army to about the same number. Here was a war army of 84,000 men symmetrically distributed between regulars and citizen soldiers on a fifty-fifty basis. No doubt this æsthetic symmetry was an essential merit in the minds of the officers who proposed it. The plan showed no trace of Washington's military wisdom. It was the legitimate offspring of Calhoun's fallacious scheme of 1820.

Let us first consider this plan from the standpoint of the measures already adopted by the Confederate Government. On March 16th, the Provisional President of the Confederacy called for 100,000 volunteers. By April 15th, 35,000 of these new troops were equipped for the field. They were all citizen soldiers. Jefferson Davis had learned to appreciate the fighting capacity of such troops when properly led. He knew that with such soldiers the coming war was to be fought and he wasted no time or effort on anything else. As these

troops were forming in the several Southern States, their organization and training were supervised by the experienced Southern officers who were then resigning from the American regular army. As General Grant said, "they leavened the whole loaf." It was an inexcusable defect of the plan submitted to President Lincoln that it did not propose the same use of trained officers by the North. It not only failed to provide for sending trained officers to the volunteers, but made this practically impossible by absorbing them in a further increase in the standing army. When you increase a regular army from a strength of 18,000 men to a new strength of more than 42,000 men upon the outbreak of war, you practically destroy its capacity to *diffuse* military knowledge among the people. When President Lincoln approved this proposal of his military advisers, he presented a great advantage to the enemy. According to General Grant, the initial superiority of the Southern troops was due to the fact that the Confederacy had no standing army.[1]

And the proposed force of volunteers was entirely inadequate. To call out only 42,000 men two months after the Confederacy had called for more than double that number indicated a total paralysis of foresight or vision. But here the people themselves redeemed the situation and saved the Union. Though only 42,000 men were called about five times that number responded and were accepted by the states. As President Lincoln said in his message to Congress two months later:

> One of the greatest perplexities of the government is to avoid receiving troops faster than it can provide for them. *In a word, the people will save their government if the government itself will do its part only indifferently well.*[2]

[1]Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 283. Under an act passed March 6, 1861, the Confederate Congress authorized the formation of a regular army. But it was intended primarily to establish a national status for the staff departments and certain special auxiliary services. No combatant troops were ever raised under authority of this law. As in the Continental Army, all of the fighting men in the Confederate Army were citizen soldiers.

[2]The italics are mine.

7

And what should have been done? Obviously there should have been a first call for at least three hundred thousand volunteers. President Lincoln was prepared for the fullest assumption of responsibility. All he feared was inadequate action. Instead of expanding the regular army, it should have been reorganized so as to release the maximum number of trained officers and non-commissioned officers for service with the new citizen army. By assigning some of the newly appointed junior officers to the companies on the frontier, more than five hundred trained officers could have been made available for the new National Army.[1] These officers should have been placed at the disposal of the Northern war governors. The author has no hesitation in making this assertion because he believes it to be sound. But he is sustained by a high authority who favored a much more radical solution. Referring to the Union Government's unfortunate policy with reference to the regulars and the volunteers, General Grant writes as follows:

> This state of affairs gave me an idea which I expressed while in Cairo [1861]: that the government ought to disband the regular army, with the exception of the Staff Corps, and notify the disbanded officers that they would receive no compensation while the war lasted except as volunteers. The Register should be kept up, but the names of all officers who were not in the volunteer service at the close should be stricken from it.[2]

[1]This could have been done without weakening the frontier garrisons in the slightest degree. As the Western battalions were on the usual skeletonized basis, a part of them could have been filled to full strength. This would release all of the officers and non-commissioned officers tied up in the other skeleton units.

[2]Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 283. On the same page, Grant gives the results of the Northern policy as follows:

> "The North had a greater number of educated and trained soldiers, but the bulk of them were still in the army and were retained, generally with their old commands and ranks, until the war had lasted many months. In the Army of the Potomac there was what was known as the "regular brigade," in which, from the command-

Thus would General Grant have returned to the military policy of Washington and Steuben. During the war, he would pay no professional officer who could not make good with citizen soldiers. At the end of the war he would retain no such officer in his peace establishment.

8

The probable effect of sending trained regular officers back to their states is worth considering. If five hundred and sixteen officers had been so detailed, they could have been assigned to the states at the rate of three officers to each Congressional district. What a boon this would have been to the great War Governors who did so much to save the Union in spite of the weakness and stupidity of the Federal Government. Thirty trained officers, most, if not all, of them natives of his state, could have reported to Governor Andrew of Massachusetts. Thirty-three could have reported to Governor Morton of Indiana. Ninety-three would have been available for Governor Morgan of New York. Fifty-seven could have reported to Governor Dennison of Ohio. And there would have been forty-two for Governor Yates of Illinois. After this War Governor's experience with former Captain Grant in his adjutant general's office, he could have found use for many more. Not all of these officers could have expected high command. Indeed many of them were not fitted for it. But each of them was trained for some useful duty in the great popular mobilization. And be it remembered that in 1861, the War Governors sought regular army

ing officer down to the youngest second lieutenant, every one was educated to his profession. So, too, with many of the batteries; all the officers, generally four in number to each, were men educated for their profession."

In the interval between Lincoln's inauguration and the end of 1861, the American Regular Army had furnished many more trained officers to the Southern citizen army than it had to the Northern citizen army. Between January 1, and September 1, 1861, 301 commissioned officers left the regular army. Almost all of these were in the Confederate Army by the latter date. But by that time only 26 Northern army officers had received volunteer commissions and all of these were above the grade of Colonel. *Army Register*, September 1, 1861.

officers and were denied them. Many a volunteer leader would have been glad to go as a lieutenant colonel under a competent regular, as Theodore Roosevelt was to do in 1898. President Lincoln has been blamed for appointing too many politician generals, but this was largely because the governors were required to appoint untrained politician colonels in 1861. This was not because the President was playing petty politics, but because he accepted an unsound military plan from his professional military advisers.

CHAPTER XVII

PROMOTION AND BULL RUN

I

THE story of the army organization of May 3, 1861, is a remarkable one. On April 15th, the President had called out 75,000 militia for ninety days. After that date, Secretary Cameron and the several bureaus of the War Department were engaged in the rush of business incident to that call. They were soon overwhelmed by countless details connected with the muster, equipment, supply, and transportation of the ninety-days' men. With the War Department so absorbed, Secretary Cameron was unable to take up the problem of the new war army. This was therefore entrusted by the President to one of his ablest assistants, Secretary Salmon P. Chase of the Treasury. As the emergency demanded it, the President gave Mr. Chase full discretionary powers, and called upon the War Department for a board of selected officers to assist him.

This board comprised Lieut. Colonel Lorenzo Thomas and Major Irvin McDowell of the Adjutant General's Department and Captain William B. Franklin of the Topographical Engineers. Colonel Thomas was already so involved in the details of the militia mobilization that he could not attend any of the meetings of the board. Captain Franklin was on special duty as Supervising Architect of the Treasury and was therefore a subordinate official in that Department.

When McDowell and Franklin reported to Secretary Chase, he informed them that the whole matter of organization was left to him. The officers were invited to make proposals but their acceptance or rejection rested solely with Chase. This was sound procedure under the emergency. There was no time for protracted town meetings. After dis-

posing of certain details of tactical organization, the two officers proposed that the volunteers should be enlisted for three years. This the secretary promptly accepted. This was a great decision and saved the government from repeating its worst error in all of its former wars.

Captain Franklin then recommended that the new volunteers should be considered as a part of the regular army, the regiments to be regularly numbered without state designations, all the officers to be commissioned by the President, on nomination by the governors, the regiments to be apportioned to the states on the basis of Congressional representation. This organization will be recognized at once as the orthodox regular army scheme descended from the Calhoun Plan of 1820 and similar in detail to one that Meade had proposed during the Mexican War. Secretary Chase rejected it promptly. He said he "would rather have no regiments raised in Ohio than that they should not be known as Ohio regiments."[1]

And Secretary Chase was right. It is true that he rejected one possible means of giving trained leadership to the volunteers. But the better means proposed by General Grant at Cairo was not suggested to him. To abandon the strong decentralized organization provided by the state governments as they existed in 1861 and to replace it by a purely centralized system was not only bad politics but bad military organization.[2] Perhaps forty-two thousand men might have entered Franklin's force. But it would make no appeal to state pride. It would not have invited an over-response of one hundred and sixty thousand men. If McDowell and Franklin had proposed to improve the secretary's cherished Ohio regiments by sending fifty-seven trained officers to Governor Dennison, it is quite likely that he would have

[1]From a letter from General Franklin written in 1877, presumably to General Upton, who cites it in his *Military Policy of the United States*, p. 234.

[2]"The only sign of life in the body politic, the half-awakened word of warning from the Democracy of the North and West, was its choice of the governors of States, a remarkable group of men soon to be known as the 'War Governors.'"—Encyc. Britannica, Article on History of the United States.

accepted it with enthusiasm. That would have been good politics as well as good military organization.

But it was impossible for McDowell and Franklin to attain to such vision. Their education and the orthodox tradition of the old army were both against it. They had not enjoyed the post-graduate experience which had enlarged the vision of Ulysses S. Grant, late Captain, 4th Infantry. Franklin's plan had some military merits, but all of these and many more were contained in Grant's. It appears that McDowell and Franklin suggested that 300,000 volunteers should be called, but as their proposed volunteer army was in fact an expansion of the standing army, it probably made little appeal to Chase, either as a politician or as a practical man.[1]

2

The McDowell-Franklin Plan was a highly effective military organization—not for the benefit of the Federal Government, but for the benefit of the Confederacy. It went far to neutralize the numerical superiority of the North and to retard the development of the Northern armies. It did not meet President Lincoln's hopes as a preparedness measure. But it gave him the distinction of making himself an extra-constitutional dictator in order to put over one of the cleverest promotion schemes[2] in the history of the army. By his extra-legal executive order, he more than doubled the authorized number of professional officers. This gave rapid promotion in the permanent establishment. Nearly every officer in the regular army was promoted at least one grade,[3] many

[1]The story of Secretary Chase's part in organizing the army is given in Upton's *Military Policy of the United States*, pp. 233–5. In footnotes, General Upton says that he obtained the facts from Generals McDowell and Franklin.

[2]For a discussion of promotion in the regular army and its influence upon national military policy, see Appendix II.

[3]A few officers didn't quite make it. For example, some captains at the foot of some of the lists didn't quite become majors, but they went nearly to the top. One of these unfortunates was Captain Winfield S. Hancock of the Quartermaster Corps. But he was to make up for this later on the battlefield. He was one of the few young officers who got into the volunteer army at the start.

of them two grades, and not a few three or more. In most regular regiments the junior second lieutenant became a captain. Many captains became lieutenant colonels, and not a few majors became colonels.[1]

All this promotion was under the normal operation of the rules of seniority then in force. But as there was no statutory restriction on the methods of selection, it was possible for astute gentlemen in the War Department to gather in some especially choice plums for themselves and their friends. And here no doubt we will be gratified to learn that the members of Mr. Chase's special committee on army organization were not unrewarded for their constructive genius. Lieutenant Colonel Lorenzo Thomas is given the new brigadier generalcy in the Adjutant General's Office. Our friend Major McDowell will no longer be the junior in the Adjutant General's Office. He becomes one of the new brigadier generals in the line of the regular army. Captain Franklin, from being one of the junior captains in the Topographical Engineers, is made colonel of the new 12th Infantry Regiment. Captain Montgomery C. Meigs of the Corps of Engineers succeeds General Joseph E. Johnston as Quartermaster General. Captain Thomas G. Wood has become a colonel of cavalry. Brevet Captain Don Carlos Buell of the Adjutant General's Department has become senior lieutenant colonel in that corps. His associate, Brevet Captain Fitz-John Porter, becomes colonel of the new Fifteenth Infantry. Captain Andrew Porter of the Mounted Rifles also becomes a colonel of infantry.[2] Our space does not permit a full enumeration of many similar instances.

3

The new organization also gives an opportunity for former officers to return to the regular army. Among those who ap-

[1]This excessive promotion was due primarily to the increase of the army, but some of it was due to vacanies caused by the resignation of the Southern officers.

[2]The exact dates of promotion are not considered in the above account. The junior grades are as shown in the *Army Register* of January 1, 1861, and the senior grades are as shown in the *Register* exactly one year later.

ply is former Captain Ulysses S. Grant. In a letter to the Adjutant General dated May 24, 1861, he modestly states that he believes himself competent to command a regiment of infantry. To this communication he receives no reply.[1] But former Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman was more fortunate. Thanks to Providence, efficiently aided by his brother John, the former lieutenant of artillery becomes colonel of the new 13th Infantry. He has distanced his old classmates in the artillery. They are still in the grade of major. Assured of a secure berth in the permanent establishment, the Colonel now feels free to relinquish his job in St. Louis.[2] And at this time William Tecumseh has little faith in citizen soldiers. In April he writes[3] to John:

> But I say volunteers and militia never were and never will be fit for invasion, and when tried, it will be defeated, and dropt by Lincoln like a hot potato.

And in the following month he writes:[4] "... I deem Regulars the only species of force that should be used for invasion." How strangely and how soon will experience broaden Sherman's military education! It will prove his prophecy as false as his history is uncritical. What ruthless invaders are these that in a few months will be marching through Georgia and the Carolinas? Are they regulars or volunteers? And who is to be their world-famed commander?

[1] Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 204.

[2] See *Sherman Letters*, p. 110-112. About the time Sumter was fired on John Sherman had urged his brother to be in readiness to form a brigade or a regiment in St. Louis or Ohio. Later in the month William wrote to John:

> "The first movements of the government will fail and the leaders will be cast aside. A second or third set will rise, and among them I may be, but at present I will not volunteer as a soldier or anything else. If Congress meet, or if a National Convention be called, and the regular army put on a footing with the wants of the country, *if I am offered a place that suits me, I may accept.* But in the present call I will not volunteer."

The italics are mine.

[3] *Sherman Letters*, p. 111.

[4] *Sherman Letters*, p. 121.

And Ohio looks out for another of her sons—this time a son by adoption. Our friend Captain George B. McClellan has left the St. Louis & Cincinnati Railway to command Ohio's contingent of ninety-days' men. Governor Dennison has appointed him a major general in the state militia. On the 11th of May the governor telegraphs to Secretary Chase, Ohio's representative in the Cabinet:

> Can McClellan get a commission for three years at once, so as to make him rank all others, and make sure of his holding the chief command here. Ohio must lead throughout the war.

The governor is seeking a commission in the volunteers. But Chase, fresh from his feat in organizing a new war army, can do better than that. Two days later he telegraphs Governor Dennison in reply:

> We have to-day had McClellan appointed a Major General in the Regular Army.

Here is promotion with a vengeance. Former Captain McClellan is now back in the permanent establishment. He is next in rank to General Scott and will be his logical successor as commanding general. It makes him available for trial as a leader. It will also make it inconvenient to replace him by a better leader, should he fail to make good. Chase will live to regret that he did not procure him the more tentative volunteer commission that the governor requested.

4

And now while our friends in Washington are busy saving the Union by increasing the regular army, let us cross the Potomac and see how things are progressing in the Old Dominion. A state convention was in session in Richmond when Fort Sumter was fired upon. When President Lincoln called for Virginia's quota of militia on April 15th, her governor refused to furnish troops for the coercion of her sister states. Two days later the state convention passed an ordinance of secession. That same day Colonel Smith of the Virginia Military Institute was ordered to report to the Governor.[1] Upon his

arrival in Richmond, the Colonel found himself a member of a board of three appointed "to aid, counsel and advise the governor in the exercise of his executive authority in the existing emergency." The action of this board was as practical as it was prompt. Says Colonel Smith:

> After consultation with the Governor, it was deemed advisable to establish a camp of instruction for the troops in the vicinity of Richmond, and to order the cadets down at once to drill the volunteers as they came in, Colonel William Gilham (Commandant of Cadets) placed in command of it, and orders were sent by express messenger to Lexington for the cadets to be sent down under command of Major T. J. Jackson. . . .
>
> The Virginia Military Institute was now called upon to fulfil the *mission* for which it had been so earnestly preparing. The cadets were organized as drill masters for the infantry troops as they arrived at Camp Lee. A detachment was sent to Harpers Ferry for the like purpose, and a detail was made to drill the batteries of artillery as they were organized by Gen. John B. Magruder at the Richmond College grounds. The duty imposed upon the cadets was severe, but it was necessary, and it was well and most effectively done; and 20,000 troops were thus prepared by them for the first great Battle of Manassas. (First Bull Run).[2]

In this manner did Stonewall Jackson and his associates begin the training of Virginia's citizen soldiers. They took up this task as earnestly, as intelligently, and as wholeheartedly as Steuben did at Valley Forge. And they had a great advantage over the Baron who had to train his drillmasters before he could begin to drill. But they were like Von Steuben in this most essential thing: they saw their mission clearly and followed no side issues. They were called upon to train citizen soldiers. They therefore wasted no time thinking of Prussian Grenadiers or of Calhoun's expansible regulars, or of permanent rank in a professional peace establishment. Stonewall Jackson was to have only three months to prepare his citizen soldiers for Bull Run, but he was to

[1]Smith, *History of the V.M.I.*, p. 176.
[2]Smith, *History of the V.M.I.*, pp. 176, 181.

devote every minute of it to the making of a "Stonewall Brigade."

5

And how did the Union leaders prepare for the Battle of Bull Run? Now that Major McDowell has a star on his shoulder, how did he utilize that symbol of command? We get a partial answer to this question in his subsequent testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War. In the course of this "post mortem" he said:

> I had no opportunity to test my machinery, to move it around, and see whether it would work smoothly or not. In fact, such was the feeling, that when I had one body of eight regiments of troops reviewed together, the general[1] censured me for it, as if I was trying to make some show. I did not think so. *There was not a man there who had ever maneuvered troops in large bodies. There was not one in the Army. I did not believe that there was one in the whole country. At least I knew there was no one there who had ever handled 30,000 troops.* I had seen them handled abroad in reviews and marches, but I had never handled that number, and no one here had. I wanted very much a little time, all of us wanted it. We did not have a bit of it."[2]

The fact is that during the three months the ninety-days men were assembled near Washington there was no systematic and uniform provision for drill or discipline or hardening. Much might have been done if the spirit of Von Steuben or of Jackson had inspired the military authorities. If a handful of cadets from Lexington could be so serviceable in Virginia, what might have resulted from the same use of the cadets at West Point? They were precisely in the same status and were equally available. They were more mature and presumably were better trained as instructors. And there were many potential instructors among the troops themselves. Some of the militia regiments were old organizations and had under-

[1]Here McDowell refers to General Scott.

[2]*Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War*, III, 38. The italics are mine.

gone special training during the past few months. Five hundred men, then in the Seventh New York, were soon to be appointed commissioned officers.[1] There were plenty of drillmasters if the authorities had sought them. McDowell and his associates had more and better facilities than the Virginia authorities had. What was lacking was the inclination and the will to use them.

That the militia had been called for only ninety days was no excuse for neglecting their training. It was a military force in the service of the United States and war was on. That they were soon to go home was an additional reason for systematic training. The camps near Washington could and should have been made "Plattsburg" training camps for future leaders of the volunteers. The time was short for full training but it was sufficient to give them the march discipline and hardening that they so sorely lacked when they advanced on Bull Run in July. The military authorities at Washington had exactly three times as much time as they now have for a Citizens' Military Training Camp.

The fact is that the officers about the War Department were thinking of other things. They were not thinking of citizen soldiers. They were expanding the regular army. The lesson of Steuben at Valley Forge had not been transmitted and had long been forgotten. The War Department was not bent on making a "well-regulated militia." The "ill-regulated militia" gathered in and about Washington was a valuable exhibit in support of their cherished scheme of regular army expansion. Little or nothing was done to destroy the evidential value of that exhibit. As it was, Congress balked at the President's extra-legal army increase. It was not confirmed by law until after Bull Run.

6

And how did this affect the Battle of Bull Run? The facts are simple. There was a small Confederate army near Manas-

[1] Of these, twenty-two became general officers, twenty-nine became colonels, and forty-six became lieutenant-colonels. Swinton, *History of the 7th Regiment, N. G. N. Y.*, pp. 377 and 493.

sas about thirty miles from Washington. The troops at the capital would greatly outnumber this force until it could be reënforced from Johnston's detachment in the Shenandoah Valley, fifty-seven miles away. If McDowell could engage Beauregard before Johnston could come fifty-seven miles, the Union forces should win. Much has been made of the fact that Patterson failed to detain Johnston as was expected. But this can be omitted from the calculation. For Johnston did not hear of the Union advance and start from the Valley until McDowell's straggling column was at Centreville, seven miles from the battlefield. If McDowell could cover these seven miles and deliver his attack before Johnston could come fifty-seven miles, the Union forces should win the battle. But just this McDowell could not do. He arrived at Centreville on Thursday but did not close with his enemy until ten o'clock Sunday morning. By that time Stonewall Jackson's Brigade with other troops had arrived from the Valley and, after a good rest, were ready to receive him. Sunday afternoon the rest of Johnston's troops came in on McDowell's right flank. This is the whole story. The slow, straggling advance, the delayed attack and the subsequent panic were all due to neglected opportunities for drill and elementary instruction in march discipline.

7

President Lincoln has been criticized for permitting the advance on Bull Run. But there were important reasons for striking an immediate blow. Military success would strengthen the government at home and abroad. A decisive Union victory then might have ended the war. If nothing could be done with the ninety-days' men then, there must be a long delay until the three-years' men could be used. When the military authorities opposed the advance on the ground that their men were untrained, the reply was:

> You are green, it is true, but they are green also; you are all green alike.[1]

[1] *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War*, III, 38.

On this assumption, the situation fully justified the risk. But unfortunately the opposing troops were not "all green alike." The citizen soldiery of Virginia had already lost something of its pristine verdant hue. If the Washington authorities had been as intelligent, as alert, and as capable as their opponents in Richmond; or if Jackson and his fellows had been as idle, as incompetent, and as dilatory as McDowell and his friends, the reënforcement from the Valley would have been too late. In this event, Bull Run should have been a Union victory. Abraham Lincoln lost his first battle because his military leaders had "left undone those things which" they "ought to have done," and had "done those things which" they "ought not to have done"; and there was "no health in" them.

After the Book of Common Prayer, the Æneid contains the most valuable maxim for the guidance of military statesmen: "Those can who think they can"[1] should be taken as the motto for all those who would create efficient citizen armies. If this task is entrusted to leaders like Washington and Steuben and Stonewall Jackson who think that it can be done and want to do it, speedy progress can be confidently expected. But if the task be entrusted to even the ablest[2] men who, like Scott and Sherman and Meade and Upton, think that it cannot be done because they want to do something else, the process will require more time. This was to be exemplified a little later. Less than nine months after Bull Run, a Union army was surprised in its camps at Shiloh, because its higher leaders had not yet learned to apply one of the elementary requirements of the art of troop leading. On the 12th day of the following month, one of these leaders was still writing to his brother John,[3] denying the fact of surprise and denouncing the worthlessness of the volunteers under his command. While General Sherman was writing the last of these letters, Stonewall Jackson, with his citizen soldiers, had already opened the Glorious Epos of the Shenandoah Valley Campaign.

[1] "Possunt quia posse videntur," Virgil, Æneid, v, 231.

[2] Indeed, the abler these are the better they will succeed in not doing it.

[3] *Sherman Letters*, 143–149.

CHAPTER XVIII

A YOUNG NAPOLEON

I

THE secession of Virginia on the 17th of April was in itself a serious blow to the Union cause. But it resulted in a special misfortune for the new War President. It carried with it the reluctant resignation of Colonel Robert E. Lee. Here we must accuse Fate of gross partiality for the South. In Stonewall Jackson she had already given the Confederacy the only man in America who was specially prepared by scientific study for high command. And now she deprived President Lincoln of the only man prepared by experience and character for the like great trust. General Scott who was too old and infirm for further active service had recommended Lee as his successor. The President had approved and had authorized Scott to tender him the office. But Colonel Lee believed that his allegiance was due to his native state. He hoped that she would remain in the Union. Two days after her secession he resigned.

If the great Virginian had been a Northern man how different the story might have been. When President Lincoln determined to create a war army after Sumter, suppose he had been able to submit the problem to Lee. We can imagine him saying, "General, I have determined not to wait for Congress. Give me a plan for a war army." What an opportunity for a man of Lee's vision and military genius! What his plan would have been we cannot presume to say. But we can safely venture that he would have proposed something better than a petty regular army expansion. We can safely say that he would have used the graduates of his beloved Alma Mater in a more fitting way. We cannot picture him allowing 40,000 citizen soldiers to waste three months in demoralizing idleness about the capital. We may even suggest

that with a Lee instead of a McDowell, Bull Run might tell a different story.

But in losing Lee, Lincoln lost more than a wise military leader. He lost one of the few professional soldiers of his day who understood the true relation of military power to the supreme civil authority in the modern democratic state. Lee's letters to Jefferson Davis breathe that loyal subordination which is the first essential of successful generalship under republican government. In this respect they find their counterparts only in the letters of Washington to the President of Congress and in the confidential letters of General Pershing to Secretary Baker.[1] It is through this relation only that the mighty energies of a modern democracy can be organized for victorious war. What a pity it was that Lincoln could not have had Lee as his military subordinate. What a war team that would have been. The daring of a great soldier wedded to the equal daring of a great war statesman.

The first result of such a combination must have been a general plan for the war, scientifically prepared and resolutely executed. In such a plan, the demands of national policy would have molded appropriate military action. When we consider that no such plan was in full effect until the spring of 1864, we may appreciate what might have been accomplished if it had been ready for the spring of 1862.

2

When Lee resigned, it was necessary for General Scott to hold on for a time until another suitable candidate should appear. But old and feeble as he was, we must give the aged general credit for some of the great decisions of the war. While he remained in command the general conception of Northern policy was settled. The navy was assigned its mission in connection with the blockade and the control of

[1]During the World War, there was a frequent exchange of confidential letters between Secretary Baker and General Pershing. These letters did not enter the official files of the War Department or of the Army Headquarters in France. Through the courtesy of Mr. Baker and General Pershing, the author has had the privilege of reading this remarkable correspondence.

the Mississippi. These two naval activities were destined ultimately to starve, sever, and strangle the Confederacy. That the process was unduly prolonged was the fault, not of the fleet, but of the armies that were to coöperate with it. The delay in the coördination of the land operations was due to the lack of a general plan that should have been formulated in the autumn of 1861.

Unfortunately General Scott was himself largely responsible for the long delay. It was he who most resisted the liberal assignment of trained regular officers to the volunteers. He opposed it because he believed that it would "ruin the regular army." That he should sacrifice the efficiency of an army of a million men to the interests of a little regular force of one-fiftieth that number seems monumental folly. But it becomes almost pathetic when we seek the secret of it in his history.

In 1861 General Scott was a tottering veteran. He was born three years before Washington was inaugurated President. He entered the regular army in 1808, when its senior officer was the unspeakable Wilkinson. He found it a worthless, incapable force. With this army he went into the War of 1812. During that war, with a few other forceful leaders, he had created a new military efficiency. In brigades such as his, the British regulars found a new type of American soldiers. They saved the honor of the American name at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane.

It was this new regular army that came out of the War of 1812 and it was with this regular army that Scott had now served fifty-three years. With soldiers such as these he had carried the American flag to the conquered capital of Mexico. Since 1812 he had had no use for citizen soldiers. He knew only the "ill-regulated" militia of his day. He had no conception of the national army of the people that Washington and Steuben had sought to establish. Like the rest of his professional brethren he had little critical knowledge of our military history.

General Scott had thus grown old in an honorable but narrow tradition. The world about him in 1861 was a new world which he could not understand and which he could only

dimly see. He still lived in the ideals of his martial youth. Here was indeed a great national crisis. But, if so, all the more need for regular soldiers. This was no time to destroy the regular army.[1]

And no pressure moved him. When Congress convened in July, 1861, there was a strong demand for trained officers with the volunteers. But even Congress respected the old general's prestige. It authorized the detail of regular officers to the volunteers "in the Commanding General's discretion." But the general refrained from exercising the discretion so liberally conferred upon him. Governor Kirkwood of Iowa asked him for the detail of an officer. General Scott refused. The governor then went to the President. The President was not hard-boiled in such matters. With some trepidation he sustained the governor. Fortunately for the cause of the Union, a few other persistent politicians made similar successful assaults upon the official military policy.

3

Our statement that Virginia had seceded has proved to be somewhat exaggerated. The western half of the Old Dominion decides to stay in the Union. In this, her loyal leaders are aided by a sister state. The people of Ohio do not relish the idea that their beautiful river is to become a new national boundary. They think it would be a good idea to push the military frontier a hundred or so miles to the

[1]General Scott's policy is described by General J. D. Cox as follows:

> General Scott, too much bound up in his experience of the Mexican War, and not foreseeing the totally different proportions which this must assume, planted himself firmly on the theory that the regular army must be the principal reliance for severe work; and that the volunteers could only be auxiliaries around this solid nucleus which would show them the way to perform their duty and take the brunt of every encounter. . . . The Confederacy really profited by having no regular army (Cox, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, I, 17).

But this theory as to the relation between regulars and citizen soldiers is much older than the Mexican War. Its origin is to be found in the Calhoun-Scott expansible standing army scheme of 1820. (See letter from Secretary Calhoun, dated December 12, 1820, cited in *Senate Report No. 555, 45th Cong., 3rd Session*, p. 145.)

east. And, as President Lincoln is having troubles of his own, Governor Dennison and his people decide not to bother him with this little affair. They decide to attend to it themselves —a striking confirmation of Mr. Lincoln's belief that "the people will save their government if the government itself will do its part only indifferently well."

And strange to relate the Ohioans decide to wage this little war with their army of ninety-days militia. Our old friend, former Captain George B. McClellan, is their leader. By the middle of July he has driven the Confederate forces over into the Shenandoah Valley. With his ninety-days men he has created a new American Commonwealth. His Napoleonic bulletins electrify the country. In an address to his victorious troops he informs them that they have "annihilated two armies commanded by educated and experienced soldiers, intrenched in mountain fastnesses, fortified at their leisure." He is hailed throughout the country as the *Young Napoleon*. On the 14th of July, he receives a telegram from General Scott transmitting the President's congratulations.

A few days later, when McDowell's panic-stricken troops fell back on Washington and beyond, all eyes turned toward the Young Napoleon. Perhaps he is the man of the hour. On the 26th of July, General McClellan takes command of the Department of the Potomac comprising the demoralized troops in the camps in and about the capital. His force now numbers 52,000 men.

4

The new commander soon brings order out of chaos. His knowledge of the armies of Europe is invaluable to him and to the nation. He begins to organize, equip, and discipline a splendid new army. Everybody trusts him. Let him tell the story in extracts from his letters. On July 27th, he wrote:

> I find myself in a new and strange position here; President, Cabinet, Gen. Scott, and all deferring to me. By some strange operation of magic, I seem to have become the power of the land.[1]

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 82.

And three days later:

> They give me my way in everything, full swing and unbounded confidence. All tell me that I am held responsible for the fate of the nation, and that all of its resources shall be placed at my disposal.[1]

On the 2nd of August he writes:

> I handed the President to-night a carefully considered plan for conducting the war on a large scale. . . . I shall carry this thing *en grand* and crush the rebels in one campaign.[2]

This plan of August 2, 1861, marks an epoch in the history of the war and of General McClellan's fortunes. In this document he submits a plan not merely for his own army but for the conduct of the whole war. He considers the situation as he sees it in the west. He refers to the importance of controlling the Mississippi but considers that the real decision of the war is to be sought in Virginia. Therefore, for the main or eastern army, to be under his own command, he calls for a force of 273,000 men. It is evidently his conception that *he* should end the war *en grand*, that to this end the bulk of the national forces should be assigned to him and that all the other army commanders should be assigned secondary rôles in support of his own decisive operations.

Here, of course, General McClellan is encroaching upon the province of the general-in-chief. And General Scott does not agree with him. With many others, Scott believes that the control of the Mississippi is the decisive strategic objective of the war. And it will be noted that the young general submits his war plan to the President direct and not through his commanding general. Here he opens a wide field for future misunderstanding and friction. This is an ill-omened precedent for the future.

But two days later the young general and the old are still on friendly terms. On the 4th, McClellan writes:

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 83.

[2] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 83. The plan referred to is given in full on pages 101–105 of the same book.

It made me feel a little strangely when I went into the President's last evening with the old general hanging on me; *I could see that many marked the contrast.*[1]

But in the next few days there are signs of an approaching issue. The commanding general has his own views on the conduct of the war which do not suit his subordinate. And here is that subordinate's reaction as he gives it in his own words on August 8th:

Came back and had a long conversation with Seward about my "pronunciamento" against Scott's policy. . . . I am leaving nothing undone to increase my force; but the old general always comes in the way. He understands nothing, appreciates nothing.[2]

And this day he also wrote to General Scott, "The enemy has at least 100,000 men in front of us." In this statement McClellan was beginning to manifest the first signs of a fatal weakness. At this time General Johnston was chafing at the smallness of his command, his lack of supplies, and the sickness and disorganization of his troops. Perhaps if the young general had given less time to General Scott's business and more to his own he might have established an effective intelligence service for the Army of the Potomac. This might prove convenient for him later. He had only been in command twelve days and his genius had accomplished wonders. But he had not yet solved every constructive problem in his own domain.

5

On August 9th, General McClellan writes:

Gen. Scott is the great obstacle. He will not comprehend the danger. I have to fight my way against him. To-morrow the question will probably be decided by giving me absolute control independently of him. I suppose it will result in enmity

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 84 The italics are mine.
[2] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 84.

on his part against me; but I have no choice. The people call upon me to save the country. I must save it, and cannot respect anything that is in the way.[1]

When he wrote the foregoing paragraph the young general was evidently thinking of the effects of the "pronunciamento" he had discussed with Secretary Seward. Later he was to consider himself the victim of political intrigue. Better had he not started that dangerous game himself.

At midnight, August 15th, he writes:

Gen. Scott is the most dangerous antagonist I have. Our ideas are so different that it is impossible for us to work together much longer.[2]

And again, the following day:

I am here in a terrible place; *the enemy have from three to four times my force;* the President, the old General, cannot or will not see the true state of affairs. . . . I am weary of all this. I have no ambition in the present affairs; only wish to save my country, and find the incapables around me will not permit it."[3]

On August 25th, General McClellan wrote:

Friend Beauregard has allowed the chance to escape him. I have now some 65,000 effective men; will have 75,000 by the end of the week. Last week he certainly had double our force.[4]

On September 8th, in a letter to the Secretary of War, General McClellan states that he has 85,000 effective men. He estimates that General Johnston after leaving ample forces south of the Potomac will soon be able to cross the Potomac above Great Falls and to advance on Baltimore with 100,000 men. But even as late as the end of the month,

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 85.

[2] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 86.

[3] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 87. The italics are mine. Here he estimates the enemy strength immediately opposed to him as from six to eight times what it really is.

[4] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 89.

Johnston has only 41,000 men. He knows that McClellan has greatly superior numbers but offers to take the offensive against him if he can have a reënforcement of 19,000 men.

In the same letter, McClellan persists in dictating a plan for the whole conduct of the war, for other armies as well as his own. In this connection he says:

> The fate of the nation and the success of the cause in which we are engaged must be mainly decided by the issue of the next battle to be fought by the army now under my command. I therefore feel that the interests of the nation demand that the ablest solders in the service should be on duty with the Army of the Potomac, and that, contenting ourselves with remaining on the defensive for the present at all other points, this army should be at once reënforced by all the effective troops that the East, West and North can furnish. In view of these facts I respectfully urge that all the available troops in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and at least ten thousand Illinois troops (there being fifteen thousand troops there unarmed), and all those of the Eastern and Northern States, be at once directed to report to me for duty. I beg leave to repeat the opinion I have heretofore expressed: that the Army of the Potomac should not number less than three hundred thousand men in order to insure complete success and an early termination of the war.[1]

Here is a magnificent Napoleonic plan. But the situation is not a Napoleonic situation. America is not continental Europe. The people of the Mississippi Valley are not the submissive, disciplined subjects of a Consulate or an Empire. And it is not yet definitely settled that McClellan is another Napoleon. It needs Ulysses' strength to bend Ulysses' bow.

6

But the young general is determined to save the country in his own way and without regard to higher authority. About October 16th he writes:

> I am firmly determined to force the issue with General Scott. A very few days will determine whether his policy or mine is to

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, pp. 105-107.

prevail. He is for inaction and the defensive; he endeavors to cripple me in every way.[1]

By the 19th the goal is within sight. On that day he writes:

Gen. Scott proposes to retire in favor of Halleck. The President and the Cabinet have determined to accept his retirement, *but not in favor of Halleck.*[2]

And on the 26th:

For the last three hours I have been at Montgomery Blair's, talking with Senators Wade, Trumbull and Chandler about war matters. They will make a desperate effort to-morrow to have Gen. Scott retired at once; until that is accomplished I can effect little good. He is ever in my way, and I am sure does not desire effective action. I want to get through with the war as rapidly as possible.[3]

General Scott was finally retired from the supreme command of the Army of the United States on the 31st day of October, 1861. As we have seen, this had been in contemplation for some time. The old general had recommended General Halleck as his successor. But McClellan had been aware of this and had been able to circumvent it. On the first day of November, he assumed command of all the armies of the United States. But Mr. Lincoln had serious misgivings. When the new generalissimo read him his order assuming command the President said:

"I should be perfectly satisfied if I thought that this vast new responsibility would not embarrass you."

To this McClellan replied: "It is a great relief, Sir! I feel as if several tons were taken from my shoulders to-day. I am now in contact with you and the Secretary. I am not embarrassed by intervention."

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 170.
[2] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 170. The italics are mine.
[3] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 171.

"Well," the President rejoined, "draw on me for all the sense I have and all the information. In addition to your present command, the supreme command of the army will entail a vast labor upon you."

"I can do it all," said the Young Napoleon.[1]

7

The assignment of General McClellan to the supreme command while he still retainec command of the Army of the Potomac was one of the most fateful decisions of the war. It seriously prolonged the struggle. It was the immediate source of the disasters of the following year. And it was the pregnant cause of McClellan's own misfortunes.

The President's misgivings were well-founded. But he had not yet learned to trust his own common sense in this unaccustomed field. He still accepted his military advisers at their own valuation. Such an assignment should never have been made. And General McClellan, as an educated soldier, should have advised the President against it. He should have known and he should have informed the President that it violated the first principle of higher military organization. For it is a fundamental principle that *the commander of a vast and complicated whole should not also exercise immediate command of one of the component parts of that whole.*

It is evident that General McClellan was ignorant of this fundamental principle of his profession. His action must be attributed to ignorance because he was an honorable and patriotic man and therefore must have apprized Mr. Lincoln of the principle if he had comprehended it. General McClellan should have said: "Mr. President, neither I nor any other man can perform this double task successfully. It is not humanly possible. It would be unsound organization if our armies were formed and trained, if our plans were perfected, and our generals and staffs were ready for action. But at a time like this, no man can assist you in coördinating several vast

[1]John Hay, *Letters and Diary*, I, 50.

theaters of war and at the same time prepare this new raw Army of the Potomac for effective action."[1]

On the eve of the disasters of 1862, the President finally relieved McClellan of this impossible responsibility. Later, in July, he made Halleck his chief of staff under the nominal title of commanding general. Thus, when too late to retrieve the disasters due to the initial blunder, he adopted the recommendation that General Scott had made to him nine months before.

Here again a great war executive was to suffer from the shortcomings of professional advice that he was entitled to accept with confidence. In May he had adopted an ill-advised army organization. Now he must give his new armies the further handicap of ill-advised high command. Such was the grievous burden that Abraham Lincoln must bear because Washington's legacy of sound military policy and sound military education had not been transmitted to him.

[1]The question for the President would then have been: "Which of these commands should be McClellan's? Shall I make him my immediate adviser as commanding general (chief of staff) or shall I leave him in command of the Army of the Potomac and bring Halleck or some other general to the War Department?" Either solution would have been vastly better than the one adopted. McClellan was highly endowed with energy and organizing genius and should have made a great chief of staff. He undoubtedly lacked the highest gifts for command in the field. But had he been permitted to concentrate on the problem of the Army of the Potomac, he might have prepared himself for successful troop-leading.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SCHOOL OF WAR

I

Among McClellan's subordinate commanders in August, 1861, was Brigadier General William Tecumseh Sherman, U. S. Volunteers. He had commanded a brigade of infantry at Bull Run and since then has had food for thought. He tells us in his Memoirs[1] that after the Battle of Bull Run he began the serious study of tactics for the first time. Perhaps now he recalls that five days before Bull Run he had written the following amazing tactical prophecy to his brother John:

> We start forth to-day, camp to-night at or near Vienna, to-morrow early we attack the enemy at or near Fairfax, C.H., Germantown and Centreville, thereabouts we will probably be till about Thursday when movement of the whole force, some 35,000 men on Manassas, turning the position by a wide circuit. You may expect to hear of us about Acquia Creek or Fredericksburg (secret absolute).[2]

When he wound up back in the defences of Washington instead of at Acquia Creek, or Fredericksburg, it perhaps dawned on Sherman for the first time that conservative tacticians are sparing of detail as to what they propose to do after contact with the enemy. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Here the Sermon on the Mount supplements the Æneid and the Book of Common Prayer as a source of valuable military maxims.

But Sherman had a keen eye for fact even when fact is not complimentary. Now he recognizes the fact of his own shortcomings and prepares to correct them. He perceives that the

[1] Sherman, *Memoirs*, I, p. 192.
[2] *Sherman Letters*, p. 125.

commander of large armies might do well to serve an apprenticeship in subordinate command. He therefore discourages his brother John who is eager to secure him further preferment by political influence. Indeed he distinctly fights shy of it and repels it. About this time he told the President that it was his "extreme desire to serve in a subordinate capacity and in no event to be left in a superior command."[1] *That*, he is willing to defer until after a reasonable apprenticeship.

2

In a letter to his brother John on August 19th General Sherman gives us another glimpse of affairs in the new Army of the Potomac:

> McClellan is so confident that Beauregard will attack that I try to be prepared at all times. Our forts are in pretty good condition, but whether the volunteers can serve the guns or not is to be tested. It does seem strange that when we all know that if Beauregard gets Washington, the Southern Confederacy will be an established fact, that they should leave Volunteers to hold the most important place in the world.[2]

But as we look back on it, it seems even stranger that if Beauregard with his volunteers and without regulars can take the capital, there should be any reason why our own volunteers in greatly superior numbers cannot defend it.

Perhaps another extract from the same letter will partly explain the mystery:

> Out of my seven regiments, three are in a state of mutiny, and I have been compelled to put about 100 men as prisoners on board a man-of-war. And yesterday I had my regulars all ready with shotted guns to fire on our own troops, some of whom not only claim their discharge, but threaten to spike our guns.

[1] Sherman, *Memoirs*, I, 293. In May he had written to John Sherman: "You all over-rate my powers and abilities and may place me in a position above my merits, a worse step than below." (*Sherman Letters*, p. 122.)

[2] *Sherman Letters*, p. 126.

It would seem that Sherman's pedagogic methods are rather hard-boiled. If there had been a little more marching and drilling before Bull Run, there would be less need now for "shotted guns."

We are not in possession of Professor Thomas Jonathan Jackson's curriculum just at that time. But we do know that he taught his citizen soldiers without any regulars with "shotted guns" to aid him. Perhaps it was a question of the instructor's education. Washington and Steuben expected their Military Academy to train Cadet Sherman as a teacher of citizen soldiers. But his Alma Mater was given another mission. She therefore obeyed orders and trained him to be a second lieutenant of artillery in Calhoun's expansible standing army. She did the same for Professor Jackson, but he has profited by post-graduate education.

3

Before proceeding further with the story of the Army of the Potomac it will be well here to consider the tactical equipment of its commander. It should be borne in mind that General McClellan had had no specific training or practice in the practical art of troop leading. He was called to the command of a great army without that apprenticeship which General Sherman so wisely insisted upon in his own case. "If," said Grant Grant, "McClellan had gone into the war as Sherman, Thomas, or Meade, had fought his way along and up, I have no reason to suppose that he would not have won as high distinction as any of us."[1]

In this statement, General Grant calls attention to a fact which is generally overlooked. None of the Northern generals were ready for high command at the beginning of the Civil War. General Grant, like the other successful Northern leaders, rose to high command after gradually increasing responsibility. He commanded 20,000 thousand men at Donelson before he commanded 40,000 men at Shiloh. He had the experience of Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth as a subordinate

[1]J. R. Young, *Around the World with General Grant*, II, 217.

commander before he had independent command at Vicksburg. He was a victorious army commander at Vicksburg before he was called to the command of a group of armies at Chattanooga. And he was a victorious group commander before he was called to supreme command. Even Napoleon had had his schooling in the command of the small Army of Italy before he commanded the Grand Army.

General McClellan's critics should remember that he did not have this essential apprenticeship. If he had succeeded in the command of the Army of the Potomac, his would have been an achievement absolutely unprecedented in history. No man in history was ever endowed congenitally with capacity to command 100,000 men in the field. Up to the time of the Civil War no man had ever commanded such a force successfully unless he had been gradually schooled to it in war itself. A few years later the war-bred leaders of Austria and France were decisively defeated by the peace-bred generals of Prussia. But this was due to a system of peace training which Frederick the Great had first invented and which the great Von Moltke had perfected. McClellan had never profited by this system of training, and though he had visited the armies of Europe he had probably never heard of it. Stonewall Jackson, by self-education, had given himself substantially the same training and, in this sense, was the only man in America who was specifically trained for troop-leading at the beginning of the Civil War. And fortunately for the North, there was only one Stonewall Jackson. Had there been another Jackson in the Mississippi Valley, even Lincoln might have failed to save the Union.

A contrast between the World War and the Civil War will throw further light upon this interesting question. The American First Army was formed August 10, 1918. It contained five times as many men as Grant or Lee ever commanded in the field. About one month after its organization it attacked and conquered the highly organized German fortifications at St. Mihiel. This was the First Army's first engagement and General Pershing's first battle as an army commander.

St. Mihiel occupies the same place chronologically in the American phase of the World War that Antietam occupies in the Civil War. Both were fought by extemporized armies seventeen months after war had begun. But here the similarity ends. Pershing's attack was characterized by the perfectly synchronized team work of his whole force that was almost totally lacking in McClellan's troop-leading. The American soldiers did no better fighting at St. Mihiel than their grandfathers did at Antietam. The difference was that there was an effective trained leadership and staff organization at St. Mihiel that was almost totally lacking in the Army of the Potomac at the end of 1862.

This great contrast between the Civil War and the World War points to a remarkable evolution of our military institutions in the interval between the two wars. This was largely due to the wisdom and foresight of Elihu Root, who organized our general staff system and developed our post-graduate schools of military application during his term as Secretary of War in President Roosevelt's first administration. Our leaders and higher staff officers in the World War were directly or indirectly the product of these reforms. We went into the Civil War without an army and also without a trained overhead competent to lead an army. The war was prolonged because most of its earlier battles were indecisive maneuvers in which men suffered and died not for victory but that their leaders might learn to lead. We also went into the World War without an army, but we did have a trained army overhead competent to train an army and to lead it when trained. The leaders and staff officers of the World War had also had their Bull Runs and Antietams, but due to the wise provision of Elihu Root, they had been able to write them in ink instead of writing them in blood. Secretary Root saw to it that his embryo Stonewall Jacksons need not resign from the Army in order to acquire the routine business methods essential to the conduct of modern war.

Through the wisdom of Elihu Root, the American Army finally returned to the method of tactical training that the Great Frederick had imparted to Baron Steuben and which Steuben had brought to Washington at Valley Forge.

4

Referring to the need of a competent staff, General McClellan wrote as follows:

> Perhaps the greatest difficulty that I encountered in the work of creating the Army of the Potomac arose from the scarcity of thoroughly trained staff officers and I must frankly state that every day I myself felt the disadvantages under which I personally labored from the want of that thorough theoretical and practical training received by the officers of the German General Staff.[1]

But like all other officers of his generation, outside of Prussia, he had little conception of the organization, training, or real functions of a modern general staff. This is quite apparent from his memorandum on staff organization to be found on page 122 of his book.

What McClellan most needed and what all of the other American generals on both sides most needed throughout the Civil War, was two small "general staff groups"—one to specialize on "Military Operations" and the other on "Military Intelligence." It is true that McClellan had no officers specially trained for these duties as Von Moltke was then training them in Prussia and as they are now trained in our own Service Schools. But he had plenty of well-educated young officers who must soon have acquired ample proficiency if they had been permitted to specialize on these duties. If he had had any conception of the functions of a general staff, he might have availed himself of its benefits. Enough educated officers to form "Intelligence" and "Operations" sections for all of the Union armies were then going to waste in the "Regular Infantry Brigade" and in the Regular Army batteries in the Army of the Potomac.

Probably no general in history ever paid a heavier penalty for the lack of a few specialized military experts to digest and collate "military intelligence." McClellan relied too exclusively upon Pinkerton's Detective Agency. The informa-

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 120.

tion from this source should have been checked against that received from spies, prisoners, Southern newspapers, and other sources. Any one of these sources of information is reliable only when checked against the others. Such work cannot be done effectively by an over-burdened headquarters staff in addition to other and more pressing duties.

If McClellan had had competent intelligence specialists on his staff, they could have exchanged notes with similar officers at other headquarters. This must soon have resulted in a reliable system. On July 28, 1862, he estimated Lee's strength as more than 200,000. At that same time General Meigs, the Quartermaster General, made an estimate based upon a systematic study of Southern newspapers. Meigs' estimate was that Lee had not less than 60,000 nor more than 105,000 men. We now know that Lee's actual strength on that date was under 90,000. McClellan's error of more than 100 per cent. was therefore due to defective staff work. Time after time he declined decisive battle with an inferior enemy because he believed himself greatly outnumbered.

CHAPTER XX

PLANLESS GROPINGS

I

THE consequences of McClellan's assignment to the double command were as complicated as they were serious. It will aid us to understand them if we will consider what might have happened if the President had appointed General Halleck to the chief command as General Scott advised. In this case General McClellan would have been free to concentrate on the training and command of the Army of the Potomac, while on the other hand the President would have had a subordinate free to concentrate upon the general military problem of preparing all of the armies, in cöoperation with the navy, for a coördinated conduct of the war. That General Halleck did not meet all of the demands of this high office when he was eventually called to it in July, 1862, must not be taken as proof that he was unfit for the task in October, 1861. In July, 1862, he was called in after defective organization and the lack of a sound plan had resulted in widespread disaster and confusion. That he did not have the high genius to rehabilitate a bankrupt organization immediately should not be taken as proof that he could not have established sound team work at the beginning.

And indeed what the general situation demanded in the fall of 1861 did not call for any exceptional genius. What was needed was a common-sense survey of the whole theater of war, a calm estimate of the enemy's probable aims and resources, the joint consideration of the several probable lines of advance against him, an assignment of commanders and staffs to the several theaters of war, and an allotment of troops to each of them after a decision as to their relative importance. Such a general plan, after consideration and formal approval of the President, must have given a reasonable

assurance of a highly successful if not decisive campaign in the spring of 1862. For in February, 1862, the numerical superiority of the Northern over the Southern armies was about as three to one. The Northern preponderance in wealth and in mechanical and naval resources was even greater. The rise of the Confederacy from its perilous position in the early spring of 1862 to its victorious ascendency in midsummer was due indeed to the genius of brilliant leaders. But the opportunity for the exercise of that genius came from the planless gropings of their powerful but unorganized enemy.

General Scott proposed to retire in favor of General Halleck about the middle of October. If this proposal had been accepted the new general-in-chief should have assumed office by the 20th of the month. The retiring commander could have given him his views on the general situation but he had no adequate general programme to turn over to him. This was really too much to expect. General Scott was too old and feeble and too wedded to antiquated methods to accomplish such a task unaided. And there was no general staff or other competent planning agency in the ill-organized War Department of that day.

But there was still ample time to form a sound plan by a well-recognized military method. By November 1st, the principal generals could have been assembled in Washington to confer with the Secretary of War and General Halleck upon the general strategic situation. Lacking a competent general staff, this was the only possible way for the central authority to secure a general view of the several separate theaters of war. It was also the most expeditious way of informing each separate commander of the general politico-military situation, of his place therein, and of the situation of each of his team mates. After such a general survey of the whole field, a general war plan might have been prepared for the approval of the constitutional commander-in-chief.

2

And who would have attended such a conference? In the first place, the Honorable Gideon Welles, Secretary of the

Navy, might have been invited to attend. With his able assistant, Gustavus V. Fox, he was already devising certain naval operations which might be interesting to the assembled generals. And, of course, for so important a purpose, Admiral Farragut might have been permitted to accompany him. Farragut and Fox were already discussing the possibility of seizing New Orleans and the mouths of the Mississippi. And then, too, there was General Benjamin Butler, who might be interested in the joint operations of armies and fleets.[1]

General Rosecrans also would be called from West Virginia where he has been studying the situation in the Mountain Department. General Sherman would also come from his new station at Cincinnati to tell us something of affairs in Kentucky. And also General Don Carlos Buell, who is slated to relieve Sherman shortly. And perhaps just at this time, General George H. Thomas can be spared for a few days. He might lend something of wisdom to our counsels.

And then there is the Western Department, where we are somewhat embarrassed just at present. Shall we invite General Frémont to attend? It would be just as well. This would be a good time to weigh his views and size him up. Frémont may not contribute much, but he has a subordinate out there who might be worth meeting. Since early September, our old friend, former Captain Grant, has been in command at Cairo. He has at last had a little luck. Thanks to Governor Yates and the Illinois delegation in Congress, he is one of the senior brigadier generals of volunteers. He has assembled 30,000 troops down at the lower end of Egypt. He says they are well trained, even if they are volunteers—and we would hesitate to contradict him. And former Captain Grant works fast. Three days after reporting at Cairo, he hears that the Confederates are planning to occupy Paducah over in Kentucky. So he beats them to it and takes the town himself. And now he has designs on controlling the Cumberland and the Tennessee rivers and even the great Father of Waters. In this scheme Grant is aided and abetted by one

[1]New Orleans surrendered to Farragut April 29, 1862. Two days later he turned the city over to General Butler, the military commander.

Commodore Foote. Foote has a fleet of queer-looking water-beetles at Cairo which he calls gun boats. Grant will want to bring the Commodore to the conference. To this, we may be sure, Secretary Welles will offer no objection.

And then there is General John Pope, who also is interested in the Mississippi. He also should attend our conference. It won't hurt him to hear something of the Eastern situation, and it won't hurt the President to weigh him in council before he tries him on a great scale in action. And then, of course, there is our senior major general, the brilliant young commander of the Army of the Potomac. What a superb chance this will be for him to impart his strategic wisdom to his assembled juniors.

And no doubt President Lincoln, the commander-in-chief, will be permitted to attend this conference of his subordinates. Being somewhat familiar with human nature, which has certain persistent qualities both in peace and war, he will now suggest a means of expediting business. He will bring a concrete proposal before the gathering. Since the 2nd of August he has had a plan prepared by General McClellan. This plan is not restricted to the business of the Army of the Potomac. It relates to the whole conduct of the war. It will therefore serve as a convenient basis for an initial order of business.

3

If the assembled generals endorse McClellan's plan as a sound strategic conception, our business will soon be done. Duly approved after the concurrence of competent experts from the several theaters of war, it will be a plan indeed. It will then only remain to clear up the mission of each general and to send him back to his troops. Every man of them will then know his job. The Secretary of War and his bureau chiefs can settle down to providing the necessary means. Secretary Welles will know just what the navy is to coöperate with and where. And General McClellan can take up the details of his great strategic conception. His mission will now be clear to himself, to each of the other generals, and to the government. Only in such a way could such a plan be

effectively approved. If approved intelligently in this way, it is a sound plan and not otherwise. But if it is McClellan's scheme only and not also the accepted plan of a duly informed constitutional commander-in-chief, it is not an approved plan in any real sense of the word.

On the other hand, if some of these generals, in good faith, are disposed to pick holes in McClellan's plan, that also will serve a useful purpose. Better to pick the holes ourselves, now, than to leave that hypercritical process to Lee, Johnston, Beauregard, Jackson & Co. next spring. In any event, one of two things will happen. We will either mend the holes in McClellan's plan and approve it, or we will make another plan.

And after all, when we think of it in terms of old-fashioned soldierly loyalty, it is the mission of each of these generals to help Abraham Lincoln save the Union, and not singly to save it himself. He, Abraham Lincoln, late attorney at law, of Sangamon County, Illinois, has become the commander-in-chief of the armies of this particular democracy—not merely in phrase but in fact. There can be no sound military organization that does not rest upon that foundation. That is our ultimate strategic bed rock. And the sooner we build on it the better.

4

But it is almost certain that McClellan's plan will not be accepted without amendment in such a conference. He says that the North should seek a decision in Virginia because the Confederates have already chosen that battle ground. But perhaps another strategic conclusion might follow from that fact. Why let the enemy choose our battlefield for us?

And then there are big issues further west. General Grant has been studying the enemy's great strategic line from Bowling Green to Columbus on the Mississippi. He thinks that it can be punctured at Forts Henry and Donelson. Commodore Foote agrees with him. Grant is also convinced that with a single commander in the West, the Union armies can secure control of the Mississippi in a single campaign. With Vicksburg and New Orleans both taken in the spring of 1862, the Confederacy would be severed in the very beginning. Few

Confederate conscripts and few supplies could then come from Louisiana or Arkansas or Texas.

And others will concur with Grant. In early October General Sherman had written to his brother John deprecating overemphasis of the Eastern theater of war. In this letter he said: "Whatever nation gets control of the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers will control the Continent." And General Pope will concur. He is about to drive the Southern troops from Island Number 10, so that our gun boats can go down to the lower river. Buell and Thomas also will appreciate the importance of the Western theater. All will concur in the principle of unified command in the West. And of course Secretary Welles will agree. Here is a real field for Gustavus V. Fox. Here is a real strategic setting for Farragut and New Orleans.

Of course the assembled generals will recognize the theoretical advantage of one great strategic objective with lesser activity in minor fields. But here comes another factor into our problem. To divert most of our troops to the Army of the Potomac will break up our *Strategic Deployment.*

For strange to say there is a great strategic deployment though the War Department never planned it. And it is fundamentally sound. Early in 1861, when the federal government was paralyzed with incapacity and panic, the people of the West, under the guidance of their great war governors, had made a sound strategic deployment—one that even Von Moltke would never excel.

The governors of Ohio and Indiana and Illinois and Iowa and Wisconsin and Michigan and Minnesota had massed their newly formed troops, first, to save the border slave states to the Union, and secondly, to preserve their vital communications with the Gulf. That is why the Illinois volunteers are massed at Cairo. Thousands of loyal citizens have become soldiers in response to the cry that "the Father of Waters must flow untrammeled to the Sea." General McClellan himself had risen to fame upon one of the crests of this mighty wave. It was the spontaneously exerted will of the people of Ohio that gave him his victories in West Virginia.

For purely military reasons, it is always dangerous to depart from an initial deployment of troops if it is reasonably sound. And then here, as always, military facts are entangled with the facts of politics. What will the people say? What will be the reaction of the people of the great Northwest if we ignore this elemental urge to redeem the "Father of Waters"? What will they think of making the Mississippi a side issue while most of their sons are ordered to the Potomac? None of these military gentlemen has had any education as to the profound scientific relation between politics and war. But its application in this case is obvious.

Evidently the McClellan plan must be modified. He cannot have three hundred thousand men for his great mass of maneuver. That is perfectly obvious. And it is decidedly to his interest to know it now instead of learning it next spring on the eve of his advance. Here is the crux of the whole war—and after all, it is the simple problem of weighing conflicting expert opinions and of appraising certain political factors which appear to enter into the problem. And can General Halleck make the necessary decision? Of this we may frankly express our doubts. But he has most effective support at hand. Strange to say, the most competent head in the world for dealing with just this problem happens to be upon the shoulders of Abraham Lincoln, attorney at law, late of Sangamon County, Illinois. And now by a remarkable combination of circumstances he happens to be our constitutional commander-in-chief. What a pity that this rational problem was not submitted to him!

We can imagine this simple problem in common sense put up to Abraham Lincoln.

"How many troops should we have by next spring?" he would ask.

"About six hundred and fifty thousand," would be the reply.

"Well," he would say, "suppose we sleep on it overnight. But as a basis to work on, I'll allot two hundred thousand to the East and the same number to the West. Cameron and Halleck and I will hold two hundred and fifty thousand in escrow and chip in with them later. In the meantime, sup-

pose you Western fellows figure on how you'd use your two hundred thousand men. McClellan, you and Rosecrans and Butler form a similar committee for the East. Both committees can report to-morrow. And then we'll put our two hundred and fifty thousand on what looks like the best horse. But one thing I'll settle now. I like that idea of Grant's. There will be a single commander in the Mississippi Valley. And I'll try to pick him before you start back West."

We will not presume to say what the final plan would be. Nor is it really material. Any plan approved by the responsible head of a state after such an opportunity for information and counsel would be a sound plan. It would contain the essential thing—clear understanding by all concerned. Every general would then leave Washington with a clear conception of his own mission and resources and the mission and resources of each of his team mates. The supply bureaus would know their objectives. The War and Navy Departments would be prepared for effective coöperation. And most important of all, the civil head of the state would have a clear objective in his great task of guiding the mighty political, moral, and economic energies of the nation.

5

But could there be any scientific sanction for such a conference? Should an untrained layman like Abraham Lincoln be permitted to deal with the esoteric mysteries of strategical science? Most of his generals would have answered this question in the negative. From their point of view he should leave all such matters to them. He should give them the necessary resources in men and money and leave the conduct of the war to experts. He should not question their wisdom. Much less should he interfere with their action. This was the orthodox view at that time. But the orthodox view was wrong. It rested upon the defective military education of that day. Even then there was the highest scientific sanction for just such a rational understanding.

The greatest scientific authority on war is General Karl von Clausewitz. After distinguished service in the Napo-

leonic Wars, he devoted the rest of his life to the scientific study of Napoleon's campaigns and to the relations between statecraft and strategy. He directed his attention, not to the ephemeral aspects of the warfare of his day, but to the fundamental nature of war as a perennial phenomenon in human nature. His great treatise, *On War* (*Vom Kriege*), was published in 1839. With reference to the supposed intricacy of strategic science, Clausewitz writes:

> The principles of the Art of War are in themselves very simple, and are quite within the compass of sound common sense; and although in tactics they rest rather more than in Strategy upon special knowledge, still even this knowledge is so limited that it can hardly be compared with any other science, either in diversity or extent. Learning and profound science are, therefore, not at all requisite, nor are even great powers of understanding. . . . The exact contrary has been long maintained, but merely from a misplaced feeling of awe regarding the subject, and from the vanity of authors who have written on the subject.[1]

Clausewitz then points out the real difficulty, as follows:

> That the conduct itself of war is very difficult is a matter of no doubt; but the difficulty is not that special learning, or great genius, is required to comprehend the true principles of war; that can be done by any well-organized head, with a mind free from prejudice, and not altogether ignorant of the subject. Even the application of these principles on a map, and on paper, presents no difficulty; and even a good plan of operations is still no masterpiece. The great difficulty is *to adhere steadfastly in execution to the principles which we have adopted.*[2]

Again with reference to a general plan for a war, Clausewitz says:

> In one word, the art of War in its highest point of view is policy (i.e. statecraft), but no doubt, a policy which fights battles instead of writing notes.

[1] Clausewitz, *On War*, III, 221. This and other citations from Clausewitz are from Colonel Maude's edition of Colonel Graham's translation, London, 1918.

[2] The italics are mine.

> According to this view, to leave a great military enterprise, or the plan for one, to *a purely military judgment and decision* is a distinction which cannot be allowed, and is even prejudicial; indeed, it is an irrational proceeding to consult professional soldiers on the plan of a war, that they may give a *purely military opinion* upon what the cabinet ought to do; but still more absurd is the demand of Theorists that a statement of the available means of war should be laid before the General, that he may draw out a purely military plan for the war or for a campaign in accordance with those means. Experience in general also teaches us that notwithstanding the multifarious branches and scientific character of military art in the present day, still the leading outlines of a war are always determined by the Cabinet, that is, if we would use technical language, by a political not a military organ.
>
> This is perfectly natural. None of the principal plans which are required for a war can be made without an insight into the political relations. . . .[1]

And again:

> The only question, therefore, is whether in framing plans for a war the political point of view should give way to the purely military (if such a point is conceivable), that is to say should disappear altogether, or subordinate itself to it, or whether the political is to remain the ruling point of view and the military to be considered subordinate to it. . . .
>
> . . . The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be contrary to common sense, for policy has declared the war; it is the intelligent faculty, war only the instrument, and not the reverse. The subordination of the military point of view to the political is, therefore, the only thing which is possible.[2]

And with reference to the essential qualifications for the directing head of a state at war, our author says:

> We are far from holding the opinion that a War Minister smothered in official papers, a scientific engineer, or even a soldier who

[1] Clausewitz, III, 126. The italics are mine.

[2] Clausewitz, III, 124, 125.

> has been well tried in the field, would, any of them, necessarily make the best Minister of State where the Sovereign does not act for himself; or, in other words, *we do not mean to say that this acquaintance with War is the principal qualification for a War Minister; elevation, superiority of mind, strength of character, these are the principal qualifications which he must possess: a knowledge of war may be supplied in another way.* France was never worse advised in its military and political affairs than by the two brothers Belleisle and the Duke of Choiseul, although all three were good soldiers.[1]

Indeed, if the education of General McClellan and his associates had included any scientific knowledge of the fundamental nature of war, they themselves would have sought the clearest understanding with their constitutional commander-in-chief. No man in history was ever more highly endowed than Lincoln with that "elevation, superiority of mind, strength of character" which Clausewitz defines as the essential equipment for the leader of a great state at war. It was just this leadership that they needed as the first condition of their own success. Their real problem was to make such limited technical knowledge as they possessed available to Abraham Lincoln. There was nothing of genuine value in their professional lore that he, with his genius for self-education, could not comprehend.

6

But alas! There was no such conference, no such rational organization of victory. McClellan has secured his double honors. There is no general plan for the war and can be none under this arrangement. McClellan has submitted a plan for the Army of the Potomac. But it disregards the general strategic and political situation, and conflicts with every other general's conception. There is no settled mission for him and none for them. The President might easily straighten out the tangle, but he cannot because the balanced and digested facts are not submitted to him. McClellan's plan for

[1] Clausewitz, III, 127. The italics are mine.

the Army of the Potomac is therefore impossible of execution but he still seeks to carry it into effect. As its inherent impossibility becomes manifest, he cannot understand the reason. He therefore considers himself the victim of intriguers who do not want him to succeed. Without comprehensive knowledge of the other theaters of war and without time to acquire and digest it, he writes Napoleonic directives to Halleck and Buell and Butler and Burnside and Thomas W. Sherman. There is no chief commander designated for the West, until the President himself orders it three weeks after the capture of Fort Donelson—too late to harvest the fruit of Grant's magnificent victory.

McClellan is too busy with the headquarters of all the armies to train the Army of the Potomac for the field. And, of special ill omen for his own future, he is too busy elsewhere to prepare himself for competent leadership. There were good grounds for Sherman's wise humility at this time. To command an army of 100,000 men is an art of exceptional difficulty—an art that is never congenital. Besides exceptional gifts, it demands gradual growth under experience, or specific training in something other than mathematics and engineering.

But though unable to concentrate upon the Army of the Potomac, McClellan is too busy with it to meet the demands of the war situation as a whole. The President therefore has no effective chief of staff. The factors of organization and personality, which should be kept separate and distinct, are now hopelessly mingled, and will soon bring forth their inevitable crop of misunderstanding, friction, intrigue, and defeat.

And another most serious evil soon becomes apparent. Four days before he relieved General Scott, the commander of the Army of the Potomac wrote to the Secretary of War: "The great object to be accomplished is the crushing defeat of the Rebel Army now at Manassas." But that is McClellan's last cry in the offensive spirit. After November 1st it is stifled by the burden of new and distracting responsibilities. His mobility is gone.

And the time was indeed ripe for an advance. The weather

was good, the finest season of the year in the Potomac country. The roads were hard and firm. At this time the effective strength of the Army of the Potomac was 134,000 men. We know now that Johnston had less than 42,000. The Union artillery was superior. The Union infantry was better armed. The health of McClellan's men was good. The health of Johnston's men was bad. Here, indeed, was Napoleonic opportunity.

7

The fundamental fault of the double command might have been less serious if General McClellan had understood the principles of general staff organization. In that event he might have formed two separate and distinct headquarters, each with its separate general staff, one for the Supreme Command and one for the Army of the Potomac. This problem was solved without difficulty by General Pershing during the World War. When the First American Army was first formed in France, General Pershing personally commanded it in the field until the Second Army was formed, without relinquishing his command of the A. E. F. But he had two separate headquarters, each with its separate general staff and each under its own chief. General McAndrew was chief of staff at the General Headquarters. General Drum was chief of staff of the First Army. General Pershing, the commander of the A. E. F., and General Pershing, the commander of the First Army, was, in effect, two separate persons. The two functions were not mixed at either headquarters or in General Pershing's head.

Each of these chiefs of staff, in the absence of the general, continued the execution of policies which he had elaborated for the general's approval and which both of them thoroughly understood. Each of them acted freely and issued orders in the general's name without consulting him except when a new situation demanded a new decision. General Pershing was therefore able to spend days with the First Army at the front, confident that, through General McAndrew, his policy and will would still dominate the whole A. E. F. Pershing probably never saw one tenth of the

orders that were issued in his name, and yet each one of them was a valid expression of his will.

If General McClellan had known enough of general staff organization to establish two such planning and executive agencies, many of his difficulties would have disappeared. Each headquarters could then have concentrated on its own problem. At the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, a chief of staff aided by competent assistants for "operations" and "intelligence" and other general staff activities would have worked on the training, equipment, and operations plans of that army. At the general headquarters, another chief similarly assisted would have worked on the problem of the war as a whole. Among other things worked out at the higher headquarters would have been an approved plan and an allotment of troops for the defence of the capital in the event that the Army of the Potomac should move away to the York or the James. With such a plan and such an organization a Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah would not be so upsetting. But as General McClellan in his two capacities was not actually organized as two separate persons there was bound to be confusion. The two eggs were not poached separately. They were hopelessly scrambled.

9

McClellan's self-sought burden of responsibility was of course overwhelming. Under existing conditions it was impossible to form a satisfactory plan, and yet it was expected of him. It irritated him that the President or anybody else should ask him about it. And irritation soon led to disrespect and discourtesy. Just two weeks after General Scott's retirement, the President wanted to see the general. Instead of ordering McClellan to report to him, he went to his house with Secretary Seward and John Hay. McClellan was out. When he came in he was told by the porter that the President was waiting to see him. He passed the door where the President and the Secretary were seated and went upstairs. They waited about half an hour, and once more sent a servant to tell the general they were there. The answer came that Gen-

eral McClellan had gone to bed. On the way home, when Hay in his indignation spoke to the President about the incident, he simply said that it was better in such times not to be making points of etiquette and personal dignity.[1]

On another occasion when the general failed to keep an appointment with the President, he said, "Never mind, I will hold McClellan's horse if he will only bring us success."[2]

Unfortunately for General McClellan, he did not perceive the true relation between the civil and the military power in the modern democratic state. Here too he was the victim of defective training and of false tradition. He had been educated to be a lieutenant in Scott's expansible standing army. He had had little training for leadership in Washington's Army of the People. He considered that the President's legitimate and necessary interest in military operations was an improper interference in his sphere as a military commander. No hope of success could be founded upon such a relation. But it is an astonishing proof of President Lincoln's patience and forbearance that he did not permit any personal resentment to influence his attitude toward General McClellan. Lincoln continued to hold McClellan's horse for more than a year.

[1]John Hay, *Letters and Diary*, I, 52.

[2]Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, IV, 468.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TAP-ROOT OF WAR

I

ABRAHAM LINCOLN never rested in his effort to find the inner secret of the terrible enigma of war. At first he felt that his professional advisers might help him to find it. But his suspicion soon turned into conviction that they were swamped in its superficial pomps and pedantries and knew little or nothing of its vital essence. He therefore returned to his old habit of self-education. As his law partner, Billy Herndon described it: "When he wished to know anything he hunted it up and dug it out to the small, fibrous end of the very tap-root."

Noah Brooks gives us a vivid picture of the War President, at this quest:

> Lincoln with that insatiate desire to know all that man could know by hard study, read all the books on war and strategy that he could find, and mastered all that these could teach him. Far into the night, when the ceaseless importunities of those who desired audience would allow him an hour or two of seclusion, he pored over books and maps, plans of battles and sieges, slowly absorbing the details of military science, as he had, in earlier years in the backwoods, grasped the parts of the various knowledge that he had made his own. McClellan regarded all this with some contempt. He grew impatient of Lincoln's questionings, his suggestions and his visits.[1]

But none of his books could give him what he sought. The *tap-root* of war was not in them. Probably none of the generals he consulted or the authors that he read had ever heard of it. And yet it had been discovered by Clausewitz long before and was fully described in his great treatise *On War*.

[1]Noah Brooks, *Life of Lincoln*, p. 326.

President Lincoln could not have read this book in English because no English translation was published until 1873.[1] And yet it is clear from his writings that he soon came to grasp the inner nature of war even as Clausewitz defined it.

Lincoln had no English text. Though he had made some study of German, he could hardly have read so abstruse a book in the original. And, indeed, the importance of Clausewitz was scarcely recognized outside of Germany until after the Prussian victories of 1866 and 1870. But Lincoln had a close friend and trusted adviser who did know Clausewitz. Carl Schurz[2] had studied Clausewitz among other military authorities. He had commenced his military studies under the guidance of a group of Prussian army officers who were his fellow exiles in Switzerland after the Revolution of 1848. He had resumed these studies in 1861 while he was Minister to Spain. Schurz had known Lincoln since 1858. He had been one of the Committee to notify him of his nomination for the Presidency and had been one of his trusted friends and advisers since that time. Whether Schurz imparted the Clausewitzian philosophy to Mr. Lincoln we do not know. But a comparison of certain passages from the War Philosopher and the War President indicates a remarkable similarity of thought on the inner nature of war.

2

It is not until near the end of his treatise that Clausewitz gathers his threads together. After discussing the superficial intricacy and complexity of war phenomena, he writes:

> Having made the requisite examination on both sides of that state of antagonism in which the nature of war stands with relation to other interests of men individually and of the bond of

[1] Stephenson's statement in his *Lincoln*, p. 286, that Lincoln had studied Clausewitz along with other text-books on strategy, is almost certainly a mistake.

[2] Schurz, *Reminiscences*, I, 244; II, 273. The author is indebted to Dr. C. V. Easum for these references and for other facts relating to the close contact between Schurz and Lincoln. Dr. Easum is the author of an interesting book entitled *The Americanization of Carl Schurz*, University of Chicago Press, 1929.

society, in order not to neglect any of the opposing elements—an antagonism which is founded in our own nature, and which, therefore, no philosophy can unravel—we shall now look for that unity into which, in practical life, these antagonistic elements combine themselves by partly neutralizing each other. We should have brought forward this unity at the very commencement if it had not been necessary to bring out this contradiction very plainly, and also to look at the different elements separately. Now, this unity is *the conception that war is only a part of political intercourse, therefore by no means an independent thing itself.*

We know certainly that war is only called forth through the political intercourse of Governments and Nations; but in general it is supposed that such intercourse is broken off by war, and that a totally different state of things ensues, subject to no laws but its own.

We maintain, on the contrary, that war is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse, with a mixture of other means. We say mixed with other means in order thereby to maintain at the same time that this political intercourse does not cease by the war itself, is not changed into something quite different, but that, in its essence, it continues to exist, whatever may be the form of the means which it uses, and that the chief lines on which the events of the war progress, and to which they are attached, are only the general features of policy [i.e., statecraft] which run all through the war until peace takes place. And how can we conceive it to be otherwise? Does the cessation of diplomatic notes stop the political relations between different Nations and Governments? Is not war merely another kind of writing and language for political thoughts? It has certainly a grammar of its own, but its logic is not peculiar to itself.

Accordingly, war can never be separated from political intercourse, and if, in the consideration of the matter, this is done in any way, all the threads of the different relations are, to a certain extent, broken, and we have before us a senseless thing without an object.[1]

And again:

If we reflect on the nature of real War, and call to mind what has been said in the third chapter if this book, *that every war should*

[1]Clausewitz, III, 121, 122. The italics are mine.

be viewed above all things according to the probability of its character, and its leading features as they are to be deduced from the political forces and proportions, and that war is to be regarded as an organic whole . . . then it becomes certain and palpable to us that the superior standpoint for the conduct of the War, from which its leading lines must proceed, can be no other than that of policy [i.e., statecraft].

From this point of view the plans come, as it were, out of a cast; the apprehension of them and the judgment upon them become easier and more natural, our convictions respecting them gain in force, motives more satisfying, *and history more intelligible.*[1]

And finally:

Therefore, once more: War is an instrument of policy [i.e., statecraft]; it must necessarily bear its character, it must measure with its scale: the conduct of War in its great features, is therefore policy itself, which takes up the sword in place of the pen, but does not on that account cease to think according to its own laws.[2]

3

And now let us observe the evolution of this same thought in the mind of Abraham Lincoln. During the winter following his election, he saw a defeated political minority preparing to appeal to that special form of political action which Clausewitz defines as war. The Secession movement might be checked if the majority would surrender to the minority upon the political issues which the election had decided. To this the President-elect would not consent. Then there was also the characteristic pacifist solution—at least avoid war by letting "the wayward sisters depart in peace." But to accept this would be the end of the whole conception of government by the people. *To avoid war, the minority must accept majority rule.* This is the central idea of the first Inaugural Address. There the issue is presented gently but inexorably:

[1]Clausewitz, III, 125. The italics are mine.

[2]Clausewitz, III, 130.

> In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors.

But it was not until after his inauguration that the President fully grasped the seriousness of the situation. The nation was drifting into war, but he now found that it was not organized to meet the demands of that particular phase of political action. As he said later in a message to Congress: "There was no adequate and effective organization for the public defence." While he was endeavoring to correct this by extra-legal executive action, he grasped the inner secret of the approaching struggle as a purely political phenomenon. On May 7th he said to John Hay:

> For my own part, I consider the central idea pervading this struggle is the necessity that is upon us of proving that popular government is not an absurdity. We must settle this question now, whether, in a free government, the minority have the right to break up the government whenever they choose. If we fail it will go far to prove the incapability of the people to govern themselves.[1]

Thus at the very beginning, while surrounded by disorder and confusion, he unerringly pointed out the underlying significance of the approaching struggle. If he had not heard of Clausewitz, at that time it is certain that his intellect was prepared to receive the teaching of the great philosopher who first deduced the true principles that govern the application of military forces to political ends.

The same thought is more fully developed in his first message to Congress, on the 2nd of July, 1861. In this document he said:

> And the issue embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man the question whether a constitutional republic or democracy—a Government of the people, by the people—can or can not maintain its territorial

[1]John Hay, *Letters and Diary*, I, 31.

> integrity against its own domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, too few to control administration, according to organic law in any case, can always, upon the pretenses, or arbitrarily without any pretense, break up their government, and thus practically put an end to free government upon the earth.

Here we find the germ of the thought that was to crystallize later into the Gettysburg Address. Here also we find a concise application, perhaps unconscious, of the Clausewitzian philosophy to the issues of the American Civil War. Further on in the same message he develops the same idea in more detail:

> Our popular government has often been called an experiment. Two points in it our people have already stated—the successful establishing and the successful administering of it. One still remains—its successful maintenance against a formidable internal attempt to overthrow it. It is now for them to demonstrate to the world that those who can fairly carry an election can also suppress a rebellion; *that ballots are the rightful and peaceful successors of bullets; and that when ballots have been fairly and constitutionally decided, there can be no successful appeal back to bullets;*[1] that there can be no successful appeal, except to ballots themselves, at succeeding elections. Such will be a great lesson of peace; teaching men that what they cannot take by an election, neither can they take it by a war; teaching all the folly of being the beginning of a war.

Also in this message he suggests an important corollary of the Clausewitzian philosophy. If war is a phase of politics, then every sound political system must include the political institutions that will be needed in order to deal with that particular phase of political action. In this connection, he said:

> It forces us to ask: "Is there in all republics, this inherent and fatal weakness?" "Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?"

[1]The italics are mine.

What a pity that he did not know that Washington had not only asked but had answered this very question! It was precisely this problem of adequate defence under republican government that he had solved. The military system that he proposed was consciously designed to preserve the great American experiment in a form "not too strong for the liberties of its own people," nor yet "too weak to maintain its own existence."

4

It is obvious that the same thought runs through the passages that we have cited from Clausewitz and Lincoln. Whether the President evolved it in his own mind, or "dug it" out of other minds through his method of self-education, is of little consequence. That he arrived at this central thought at all, at the beginning of the struggle, is a tremendous intellectual achievement. It is of vast importance to know the real nature of a difficulty that confronts us. He who would deal with the great fact of war would do well to begin with a knowledge of what it is. "Many generals have failed to conduct war successfully because they did not understand its real nature, and many statesmen have failed in their efforts to prevent it for precisely the same reason."[1]

Did Carl Schurz lead Abraham Lincoln into this fruitful field of thought? We cannot answer this question definitely, but it is at least possible. That Schurz had studied Clausewitz we know. That his intellect was broad and keen enough to grasp its application and its implications is beyond doubt. We also know that Schurz was in close and frequent contact with Lincoln during the winter of 1860–61, while a strained political situation was in process of transmutation into war.[2] Could a student of Clausewitz have seen this without grasp-

[1]Palmer, *Statesmanship or War*, p. 4. A discussion of the Clausewitzian philosophy with special reference to the causes of war and its prevention is contained in the book here cited.—*The Publishers.*

[2]On December 27, 1860, Schurz wrote to the President-elect laying before him the "basic ideas of a plan for arming the free states." (Schurz, *Intimate Letters*, p. 238.) On February 10, 1861, he had a long and intimate discussion with Lincoln at Springfield. It was on this occasion that he was permitted to read the draft of the Inaugural Address.

ing its implications? Could Schurz, with this key to the whole situation in his mind, fail to communicate it to the man who most needed it? Schurz was one of the few who had been permitted to read the Inaugural Address before Lincoln went to Washington. He had attended the inauguration. He was still in Washington, in close contact with the President, when Lincoln gave his analysis of the approaching war to John Hay on the 7th of May. Lincoln frequently solicited Schurz's advice and Schurz was never reluctant to give it freely even when it was unsolicited. But whether Carl Schurz communicated the Clausewitzian philosophy to Abraham Lincoln, each of my readers must determine for himself. To me, the chain of circumstantial evidence is very strong.

CHAPTER XXII

ABRAHAM LINCOLN INTERFERES

I

THE confusion produced by the faulty organization of the "High Command" of the Northern armies is sufficient to account for all of the disasters that befell General McClellan and the Army of the Potomac in the spring of 1862. This confusion was at its height when Mr. Stanton became Secretary of War on the 11th of January, 1862. In the first place, the organization of the War Department was unsound. After twenty years of the Scott régime there was no conception of the proper subordination of the commanding general to the Secretary of War. And there was no settled general plan for the conduct of the war. Without such a general plan, duly approved, there could be no comprehensible mission for the Army of the Potomac.

General McClellan was in a false position as a result of faulty organization and so also was Secretary Stanton. This is sufficient in itself to account for all of the misunderstanding and friction between them. The secretary needed in the commanding general a military chief of staff, such as we now have, to aid him in the conduct of the war as a whole. General McClellan, tied as he was to the immediate command of one of the armies, was not free for the exacting duties of the higher command. Either as chief of staff or as commander of the Army of the Potomac he might have contributed toward concerted action. But under the double command no intelligent concert was possible. The result was indecision and delay, when the financial, the diplomatic, and the political situation demanded action and action promptly. If the situation was difficult for General McClellan, it was even more difficult for a newly appointed Secretary of War.

If anything could be needed to emphasize the inherent faults of the situation, it was provided when General McClellan was taken sick with typhoid fever in December. When this happened, everything stopped. If General McClellan had been "one person," the Army Regulations and the custom of the service would have met the situation. When he went on "sick report," the next in rank would assume his responsibilities and perform his duties. But there was no "next in rank" in line for his double functions. If there was a plan for the general conduct of the war and a correlated plan for the Army of the Potomac and a plan for the protection of the capital, they were locked together in the double commander's head. In this case the war must stop until a sick man should get well.

2

This was the situation that confronted the President early in January, 1862. But the war was a going concern and was not disposed to wait for any man's convalescence. Therefore, on the 10th of January, he called a conference at the White House. Those present were General McDowell, General Franklin, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Acting Secretary of War. General McClellan was not yet well enough to attend. In opening the conference, the President said:

> If something is not done soon, the bottom will drop out of the whole affair; and if General McClellan does not want to use the Army I would like to *borrow* it, provided I could see how it could be made to do something. What can be done with the Army soon?

This question was addressed to General McDowell, who replied that it was feasible to attack the enemy at Centreville and Manassas.

Three days later the conference was reconvened. This time General McClellan was present, and also Montgomery Blair, the Postmaster General, and General Meigs, the Quartermaster General. The President explained to General McClel-

lan why it had been necessary to consult his subordinates in his absence and directed General McDowell to repeat his proposal. This was received coldly. General McClellan was then pressed to state what he proposed to do. After a pause, he replied that it was his intention to have General Buell open the operations in Kentucky. He paused again and then said:

> "I am very unwilling to develop my plans, for I believe that in military matters the fewer persons to whom they are known the better. I will tell them if *ordered* to do so."

The President then asked: "Do you count upon any particular time? I do not ask what that time is, but have you in mind any particular time fixed when a movement can be commenced?"

"I have," General McClellan replied.

"Then," said the President, "I will adjourn this meeting."[1]

The above account fully confirms our conclusion that General McClellan had no general plan for the conduct of the war—certainly none that had been submitted to and approved by the President. It also reveals McClellan's conception of his relation, as a military commander, to the civil head of the state.

3

There was no action or indication of effective action after the conference of January 13th. Therefore on the last day of the month, the President ordered General McClellan to move against the Confederate position at Manassas, the advance to begin on February 22nd. Upon the receipt of this order, General McClellan received permission to submit an alternative plan based on the idea of a détour instead of a direct advance upon the enemy.

As the President finally yielded and consented to the détour as it eventually developed in the Peninsula Campaign, it will be interesting to consider the strategic merits of the proposed direct advance. In the first place, let us examine

[1]The authorities for the account of this conference are given in Rhodes, *History of the United States*, III, 467–8.

the President's strategic conception in the light of our present knowledge. If the Army of the Potomac had advanced on the 22nd of February, it would have encountered an army greatly inferior in strength and armament and this just at the time when the whole Confederacy was demoralized by Grant's victory at Fort Donelson. Such a double thrust might have been decisive. And the time was most favorable in other respects. Most of the Confederate troops had been enlisted for one year and the end of their term of service was now approaching. McClellan would then have attacked a disintegrating army instead of waiting, as he did, until after the Conscription Act in April had refilled and expanded the Confederate ranks. If the President's order had been obeyed there would have been coördinated team work East and West, in spite of the lack of a general plan.

But as these special advantages could not have been known at the time, let us consider the proposal from the general standpoint of strategy. The defeat of the Confederacy demanded offensive strategy. Of offensive warfare, Clausewitz says:

> Every unnecessary expenditure of time, every unnecessary détour, is a waste of power, and therefore contrary to the principles of Strategy.
>
> It is most important always to bear in mind that about the only advantage which the offensive possesses is the effect of surprise at the opening of the scene. Suddenness and irresistible impetuosity are its strongest pinions: and when the object is the complete overthrow of the enemy, it can rarely dispense with them.
>
> By this, therefore, theory demands the shortest way to the object, and completely excludes from consideration endless discussions about right and left here and there. . . .
>
> Buonaparte never acted otherwise. The shortest high road from Army to Army, from one capital to another, was always the way he loved best.[1]

To justify President Lincoln's action in this situation, it is not necessary to assume that he had read this passage in

[1]Clausewitz, III, 153, 154.

Clausewitz. All reputable authorities would have told him substantially the same thing. And if he had read none of them it must have found sufficient sanction in his plain common sense. The difficulty was not in the conception but in the execution. And McClellan probably knew that he could not execute this plan. He lacked the fighting instinct that Grant manifested from the beginning of his career at Fort Donelson—to seek the solution of a tactical difficulty in immediate combat. This is always the characteristic of the real general. There were difficulties, it is true. There are always difficulties even in a peace maneuver. There were muddy roads and difficulties of supply. But they were no greater except in scale than those Grant encountered. And so McClellan lost another chance of a glorious victory.

And indeed the proposed *détour* by the Peninsula was the characteristic and almost invariable error of the tyro in tactics. He measures the difficulties in his front and thinks that he can avoid the inevitable cost of victory by going around. And strange to say no professor of tactics ever exposed this error more concisely than President Lincoln did in a letter to McClellan on April 9th. The general had dodged intrenchments at Manassas only to encounter them again at Yorktown after all hope of strategic surprise had gone. In his letter the President said:

> I suppose the whole force which has gone forward to you is with you by this time. And if so, I think it is the precise time for you to strike a blow. By delay the enemy will relatively gain upon you—that is, he will gain faster by fortifications and reënforcements than you can gain by reënforcements alone. And once more let me tell you, it is indispensable to you that you strike a blow. I am powerless to help this. *You will do me the justice to remember I always insisted that going down the bay in search of a field, instead of fighting at or near Manassas, was only shifting and not surmounting, a difficulty; that we would find the same enemy and the same or equal entrenchments at either place.*[1] The country will not fail to note, is now noting, that the present hesitation to move upon an intrenched enemy is but the story of Manassas repeated.

[1]The italics are mine.

Indeed, the only effect of the *détour* was delay, when delay alone could save the enemy from defeat.

4

In March, 1862, President Lincoln over-ruled General McClellan in a matter affecting the internal organization of the Army of the Potomac. The general had contemplated grouping his infantry divisions into Army Corps, but expressed his intention to postpone their organization until he could select his corps commanders after testing their efficiency in battle. On the 8th of March, the President overruled the general and peremptorily ordered him to establish the Army Corps organization at once. Most historians have criticized the President severely for this interference in General McClellan's domain. But here again Mr. Lincoln's action was justified by the highest scientific authority.

General McClellan's conceptions of army organization were based largely on his observation of the French Army in 1855. The French Army was formed into Army Corps because, since the days of Napoleon, large armies had been so subdivided. General McClellan therefore proposed, in the course of time, to follow his French model in this respect. But Napoleon's philosophic reasons for the organization were not understood in France at that time. The subject of the Army Corps is discussed most superficially in Duparcq's *Elements of Military Art and History*, published in France in 1857 and translated into English by General G. W. Cullum in 1862. Neither General Duparcq nor General McClellan nor General Cullum were aware that the scientific considerations that influenced Napoleon in the formation of Army Corps are fully developed in Clausewitz's treatise *On War*.

In his consideration of this subject Clausewitz, as usual, bases his philosophy on the simple grounds of common sense. He simply asks and answers this question, "What is the maximum number of divisions that can be handled effectively in battle by a single commander from a single headquarters?" If an army contains more than this maximum

number of divisions, they *must* be grouped into Army Corps. It will suffice here to quote briefly from Clausewitz's conclusions:

> Certainly it seems that the supreme direction of an Army (and the direction of every whole) must be greatly facilitated if there are only three or four subordinates to command, but the commander-in-chief must pay dearly for this convenience in a twofold manner. In the first place, an order loses in rapidity, force and exactness if the gradation ladder down which it has to descend is long, and this must be the case if there are Corps Commanders between the Division Leaders and the Chief; secondly, the Chief loses generally in his own proper power and efficiency the wider the spheres of action of his immediate subordinates become. . . .
>
> *But on the other hand the number of parts must not be too great, otherwise disorder will ensue. It is difficult enough to manage eight Divisions from one Head Quarter, and the number should never be allowed to exceed ten. . . .*
>
> This is the abstract view of the case. The particular case may present good reasons for deciding otherwise. Likewise, we must admit that, although eight or ten Divisions may be directed when united in a level country, in widely extended mountain positions the thing might perhaps be impossible.[1]

Now what would be the practical application of these principles in the Army of the Potomac? On the date of President Lincoln's order it comprised thirteen divisions, an artillery reserve, a cavalry reserve, and a separate engineer command, or sixteen units[2] to be directed from a single army headquarters. It comprised six units more than the maximum that Clausewitz would allow under a trained commander and staff in open country. It comprised double the permissible maximum if we consider the difficult communications in McClellan's probable theater of war. Evidently there was the highest sanction, both in scientific authority and in common sense, for the President's order.

And, of course, when we consider the philosophy of the

[1]Clausewitz, II, 26–28. The italics are mine.

[2]This does not include Dix's Command at Baltimore or the troops that later were left at Washington under Wadsworth.

corps organization as given by Clausewitz, the reasons for McClellan's proposed delay were absolutely untenable. *He would await the test of battle before adopting an organization without which the successful conduct of battle would be impossible.*

5

There is great probability that Clausewitz's views on Army Corps were actually brought to the President's attention by Carl Schurz. Just at this time Schurz was in close consultation with the President in the development of a politico-military enterprise of the highest importance. He had recently taken leave of absence from his legation in Spain in order to urge Emancipation as a purely military enterprise. While in Europe he was impressed with the idea that foreign intervention could be prevented only by one or the other of two things. Either the Union armies must soon win decisive victories in the field, or the war should be given a political objective that would appeal to the moral sense of the world. Just at this time, he was in communication with the President on this business. Two days before Lincoln issued the Army Corps order, Schurz had started a campaign of education for Emancipation in a public speech which had been read in advance and approved by the President. With little hope of immediate victory in the field, the President was approaching the Emancipation Proclamation as a decisive military measure. Could such an instance of the predominance of the political element in the conduct of war have escaped a student of Clausewitz like Carl Schurz?[1] Here Lincoln was contemplating a specific political act purely as a decisive weapon of military strategy.

And suppose that at this time the President should mention his concern for the Army of the Potomac and its inactivity. Suppose he should refer to the Army Corps controversy and to McClellan's reason for delay. How would this impress Carl Schurz or any other intelligent student of

[1]Schurz appears to have reviewed his study of Clausewitz while he was Minister to Spain. It was also there that he first contemplated Emancipation as a war measure. *Reminiscences*, Vol. II, p. 273.

Clausewitz? What would he say? His reply would almost inevitably be, "Why, Mr. President, if McClellan says that, it shows that he doesn't know what an Army Corps is."

This would open the whole question of army organization and illumine the false policy of the past six months in terms of simple common sense. Whether such a conversation actually took place we do not know. But we do know what the President did. On March 8th he ordered General McClellan to form his Army Corps at once. Three days later he cut the gordian knot that was strangling his "high-command." On March 11th he relieved General McClellan of all responsibilities save the command of the Department of the Potomac. Now, at least, McClellan should be free to win victories. On the same day he placed the Mississippi Valley theater under one command—but too late to gather the full harvest of Grant's victory at Donelson. These decisions were sound and they were great. In making them, was Lincoln guided by scientific authority or by that transcendental common sense which is genius?

CHAPTER XXIII

TRIAL AND ERROR

I

PRESIDENT LINCOLN has been criticized for issuing his War Orders of January and March, 1862. In issuing them he distinctly interfered with his military subordinates. Here he was indeed subject to criticism—not because he interfered, but because he did not interfere sooner. He should have interfered in November, 1861, when his instinct told him that McClellan's assumption of the double command was wrong. He presumed that his general knew his business. This presumption was a reasonable one and naturally outweighed a layman's instinct. He was right in rejecting bad organization when he was finally convinced that it was bad, but it was too late to escape its inevitable penalties.

The campaign of 1862 was already doomed. Perhaps the President should have relieved McClellan from command of the Army of the Potomac at the same time. But he still had confidence in his generalship and believed that he could win in the field if relieved from the distracting double burden. But the threads were inextricably tangled. When McClellan left for the Peninsula, he left no central organization at the capital. He did not leave an organized general headquarters staff such as General Pershing always left at Chaumont.

And just when the North with its superior resources was hampered by bad organization and bad advice, the South with its inferior resources was restored by good organization and sound advice. On the 13th of March, President Davis made General Lee his chief of staff.[1] Free from the immediate

[1]The order ran: "General Robert E. Lee is assigned to duty at the seat of Government, and under the direction of the President, is charged with the conduct of military operations of the armies of the Confederacy." It will be noted that this is precisely the office that General Scott recommended for General Halleck in October, 1861.

command of any of the separate armies, General Lee immediately took up the general problems of high command. The most pressing of these was the problem of man power. Most of the Confederate troops had been enlisted for one year and the end of their service was now approaching. The new chief of staff met this situation in a large way. A general plan of conscription was prepared in his office and on the 16th of April was enacted into law.

And strange to say, just as the South was organizing its inferior numbers, the North was sacrificing the full advantage of superior numbers. Two days after the Conscription Bill was taken up in the Confederate Congress, the Federal War Department stopped enlistments and broke up its recruiting and replacement system. In solving their manpower problem, President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton had no responsible and subordinate chief of staff to advise them.

2

The next problem confronting General Lee as chief of staff was to gain time. The new conscription law would eventually give him men, but they must be trained and the army must be expanded to receive them. In the meantime General McClellan's great army had already landed on the Peninsula. He must be held off and delayed until the expanded armies of Johnston and Jackson could be ready to receive him.

And here McClellan followed Lee's lead and played his game for him. As the facts are now before us, we know that with greatly inferior forces before him, his advance was faltering and slow. It is sixty-seven miles from Fort Monroe to the Chickahominy and it took the Army of the Potomac fifty days to cover that distance. Some of this delay may be attributed to a lack of aggressive spirit. But most of it was the penalty of faulty organization.

While distracted by the burden of double command, McClellan had had no time for his own training and practice in the practical art of troop-leading. His opponent did not suffer from this handicap. Since the Battle of Bull Run,

Johnston had grown in the school of experience. For almost a year he had commanded and administered an army in the field. His staff had learned to aid him in that special business. He had maneuvered and marched his army. He had thus learned the "feel" of his weapon. McClellan had had no time for such practical schooling and his disadvantage was therefore obvious. He must now lead a larger army with less personal experience, with a less experienced staff, and with the added handicap of operating in an unknown, ill-mapped, and unfriendly country.

And there was a still greater handicap. As we have seen, McClellan's Intelligence Service was worthless. This was again the result of defective staff organization—again a penalty of the double command during the period of organization. If General Halleck or General McClellan himself, or any other intelligent man, had been acting solely as chief of staff or general-in-chief, he must have established a central Intelligence Service in liaison with a similar agency at every subordinate headquarters. This must have resulted in the checking and analysis of information and in its distribution to all concerned.

This service General McClellan did not develop at either headquarters. He received exaggerated reports from a detective agency and did not have them checked against other sources. His staff, in this sense, became a permanent "inferiority complex" and exerted just that influence upon his strategy. Almost always superior in strength to his enemy, he almost always considered himself greatly inferior—and acted accordingly. This seriously affected his own troop-leading and started a bad tradition in the Army of the Potomac. It seems strange that so unsuccessful a general could have retained the enthusiastic admiration of his officers and men. The explanation seems to be that they accepted his estimates of hostile strength. They therefore praised him for his skill in repeatedly saving them from an overwhelming enemy.[1]

[1]For a full discussion of the causes and effects of McClellan's faulty estimates of Confederate strength, see Cox, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, I, 250–253, and also Rhodes, *History of the United States*, IV, 50–53.

3

The decisive factor of the Peninsula Campaign was Stonewall Jackson's activity in the Shenandoah Valley. This produced panic at the capital and prevented McDowell from joining McClellan. It was the genius of Lee that conceived and the genius of Jackson that executed these brilliant operations. But the opportunity for them lay in McClellan's faulty organization of the Federal high command. When the Army of the Potomac went to the Peninsula there were probably, as McClellan contended, ample forces to cover the capital from all approaches—including that through the Shenandoah Valley. He had a conception, and apparently a good one, as to how these forces should be used. But he did not work out and organize that conception and leave it in executable form when he left Washington for the Peninsula. Just that, not as a mere conception, but as a definite working project with a selected commander and staff to execute it, was an essential "Annex" to his plan of operating against Richmond from the flank. If that had been done, McDowell could have gone with him at the beginning. And with McDowell with him it is inconceivable that even Lee and Jackson could have prevented the capture of Richmond.

General Lee continued to exercise the functions of chief of staff for the whole Confederacy until June 1, 1862. On that date, General Johnston having been wounded, Lee assumed command of the army in the field. His fame rests upon his achievement as an army commander after that day. But it may be questioned whether he ever served the Confederacy more effectively than during the eleven weeks when he acted as the President's chief of staff. He found the Confederacy weak and disorganized and about to succumb to superior numbers. During that brief time he created great new armies and held off the enemy until he had organized the means of victory.

Nor should we ignore Stonewall Jackson's services during that year of preparation before the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. During that time he served the troops in Virginia as Steuben had served Washington at Valley Forge.

After Bull Run, his Stonewall Brigade was the model for the army. He showed how quickly wise and willing leaders can make brave and skilful soldiers out of patriotic American citizens. It was his model and his methods which did so much to convert the new conscripts of April, 1862, into the victorious veterans of July and August.

But even with the combined genius of Lee and Johnston and Jackson, the organization of Southern victory demanded time. There was panic throughout a disorganized and declining Confederacy when Grant seized Donelson in February, 1862. Why did not the Army of the Potomac advance on Richmond then? The critics of President Lincoln's War Orders should remember that that is precisely what he ordered—just six weeks before Davis made Lee his chief of staff.

4

In considering the brilliant operations of the Army of Northern Virginia, we can scarcely over-estimate the influence of the close contact between Lee and Jackson. In the one, genius and character were tempered by experience, and in the other, genius and character were refined by scientific study. This is a formidable partnership for the conduct of war. For a long time it was enough in itself to balance the numerical odds against the Southern cause.

The death of Jackson therefore marks an epoch in the history of the war. In him the Confederacy lost something that could never be replaced. What this was, was more than Jackson's genius as a commander. After Lee lost Jackson he began to suffer, as his opponents did, from the need of a trained general staff. The lack of such an agency was of little moment when Lee had Jackson as his strong right arm. This is the secret of Second Bull Run and Chancellorsville.

With Lee and Jackson each seated on a cracker-box with a map between them, operations plans were simple. It was simply a question of giving Jackson a decisive mission with a supporting mission for the rest of the army under Lee. With these two things settled between these two, the rest was easy. The operations order could then be the one word

"Go." This was enough for a Napoleonic detachment commander. But of these, there was no other after Jackson fell.

Lee, after Chancellorsville, and all of the other generals on both sides throughout the war, suffered from the need of a trained operations staff. For example, it was the lack of such an agency that prevented a vigorous pursuit of Lee after Gettysburg. It is usual to attribute Meade's inactivity to the exhaustion of his army. But the real cause is to be found in the exhaustion of brain and nerve force in the general himself. The three days of battle were the culmination of prolonged nervous and mental stress under crushing responsibility. A successful pursuit demanded new intellectual energy for the solution of a new problem, and new stores of nervous energy and driving force for its execution. In Meade's situation this was impossible. The brain and the will of the army were much more exhausted than its legs.

But if Meade had had a modern general staff, a few trained minds, undisturbed by responsibility, would be preparing all the time for the possible contingency of pursuit. The troops would be listed in the order of freshness and availability. Parallel roads would be studied. Distant supporting troops would be in readiness with telegraphic orders all ready for the wires. Possible obstacles to delay the retreating enemy would be studied and exploited. All this, checked up and approved by a trusted chief of staff, would be ready for General Meade while Pickett was delivering his assault. After a few questions and answers, the general could nod his approval and retire to his tent. A fresh pursuit brain would then take up the work while the tired battle brain rested.[1]

5

We are now prepared to appreciate the real history of Lincoln's first two years as a War President. It is the story

[1]In the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the First American Army was in continuous battle from September 26 until November 11, 1918. In his general staff organization, General Pershing had a second brain that worked continuously and never slept.

of a great War Statesman, with a natural genius for war, struggling against the handicaps of bad military policy and incompetent military advice. But he finally groped his way to a solution of the problem of command—the same solution that McClellan dissuaded him from adopting in October, 1861. The same solution that Elihu Root was to establish by law forty years later. On the 11th of July, 1862, Lincoln summoned General Halleck to Washington to serve as chief of staff.[1]

But in the meantime Lee had taken the offensive and had forced McClellan's army to Harrison's Landing, where it was now based upon the James. This was the tangled situation that confronted the new chief of staff. What should he advise the President to do? Should McClellan advance from his new base or should his army be withdrawn? Halleck arrived in Washington July 23rd and visited McClellan at his headquarters on the 25th.

It was finally decided that McClellan should be withdrawn —a decision that led to new disasters. But the decision flowed from the original defects of staff organization during the period of the double command. There were great advantages in McClellan's new position, which Grant was to attain only after heavy losses two years later. But again McClellan's Intelligence Service was to play him false. On July 28th, Lee's strength was not more than 90,000 men. McClellan estimated it at more than 200,000, and therefore demanded vast reënforcements before he could advance. On July 30th he learned that Lee had sent Jackson with 30,000 men northward against Pope. McClellan now outnumbered Lee two to one. If he had advanced then he would not have been recalled. His recall was not justified by the situation as it actually existed. But by his own estimate of the situation it was inevitable. This is the disadvantage of having an

[1]General Halleck was nominally "General-in-Chief" and was so designated in orders, but as he himself stated later, his actual position was that of military adviser or chief of staff for the Secretary of War and the President. See *National Defense* (Hearings before Military Affairs Committee, H.R., 69th Congress, 2nd Session), Part I, p. 541.

"inferiority complex." When a general *thinks* he is inferior, that is what he is.

And so President Lincoln must wait another year before he can see even the dawn of final victory. He has patched up the faults of the war machine that his experts prepared for him. Now he must find a competent man to drive it. He must wait till a general is trained in the school of war and he must find him by costly trial and error. He is willing to delegate all power to this man when he comes and he is always looking for him. But till he comes, he himself must bear the responsibility of supreme command that the Constitution imposes on him. In the meantime, without the stimulus or the hope of immediate victory, he must keep up the war spirit in a divided, inexperienced, and fault-finding people. He must not be judged as the civil head of government, free to act through competent, delegated military agencies. He was not in that position until 1864. If we would appraise his military genius and achievement, we must consider it in the light of the actual task imposed upon him.

6

And now for the story of trial and error. As the Army of the Potomac is withdrawn from the Peninsula, its divisions are turned over to a new commander, General Pope. When Pope is defeated at Second Bull Run and the army thrown back on Washington, the President restores McClellan to command. Here again the general's magnetic energy asserts itself. The defeated army recovers its lost morale. McClellan checks Lee's promising invasion of Maryland, but allows him to escape after the Battle of Antietam. Once more he declines the proffered gift of decisive victory. Then the President relieves McClellan finally and tries Burnside, who suffers defeat in a hopeless frontal attack at Fredericksburg. Then General Hooker has his chance. He crosses the Rapidan in a superb maneuver only to be defeated at Chancellorsville and to fall back before inferior forces under Lee. As Hooker advances to counter Lee's new invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania, he too is relieved on the eve of battle and

General Meade commands at Gettysburg. Again Lee is allowed to escape with his beaten forces. Again the full harvest of victory is lost.

But on the day of indecisive Gettysburg, news comes that after a brilliant campaign General Grant has captured Vicksburg. A little later he restores the Western situation in the Battle of Chattanooga. A new commander with the knack of victory has arrived. This is the beginning of the end. The next year all of the armies are coördinated under Grant's command, the President no longer interferes with his military chief, and early the next year the final victory comes.

President Lincoln's attitude toward his military commanders during the period of trial and error is given by General Grant as follows:

> In my first interview with Mr. Lincoln alone he stated to me that he had never professed to be a military man or to know how campaigns should be conducted, and never wanted to interfere in them; but that procrastination on the part of the commanders, and the pressure from the people at the North and Congress, *which was always with him*, forced him into issuing his series of "Military Orders"—one, two, three, etc. He did not know but they were all wrong, and did know that some of them were. All he wanted or had ever wanted was someone who would take the responsibility and act, and call on him for all the assistance needed, pledging himself to use all the power of the Government in rendering such assistance.[1]

But even after Grant's arrival, the President never relinquished the supreme conduct of the war. He retained his mastery to the end. During the winter of 1864–5 General Grant reported that General Lee had proposed a conference with him with the view of taking steps toward settling the issues of the war. In reply to this the President himself wrote the following letter which was signed by Stanton:

> The President directs me to say to you that he wishes you to have no conference with General Lee unless it be for the capitula-

[1]Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 122.

> tion of General Lee's Army or on some minor and purely military matter. He instructs me to say to you that you are not to decide, discuss or confer upon any political question. Such questions the President holds in his own hands, and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions.

Here is an assertion of the supremacy of the political factor in the conduct of war that would not be unworthy of Clausewitz himself. Here Grant is reminded that he and his armies are merely the instruments of a dominating statecraft. It is the general's business to secure victory, the President himself will decide what to do with it. As Clausewitz asks and answers the question:

> Is not War merely another kind of writing and language for political thoughts? It has certainly a grammar of its own, but its logic is not peculiar to itself.

7

But alas, Abraham Lincoln did not live to harvest the fruits of victory. The great problems of reconstruction were not to be solved by his merciful wisdom. They were left to smaller and weaker men who were swayed by passion and faction. As historians speculate on what he might have done with the political aftermath of war, may we not question what he might have done with the problem of war itself? At the very beginning he had clearly seen the genesis of the Civil War in faulty military institutions. Might he not have considered that too in his plans for a regenerated nation?

That this was in his mind, we have unmistakable evidence. In a public address after his reëlection, when final victory was at last in sight, he said:

> It has long been a grave question, whether any government not too strong for the liberties of its own people can be strong enough to maintain its own existence in great emergencies. On this point the present rebellion brought our republic to a severe test and a presidential election added not a little to the strain. . . . In any future great national trial, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us therefore study the

incidents of this as philosophy to learn wisdom from, and none of them as wrongs to avenge.

Here again we have the same question that he presented in his first message to Congress in July, 1861[1]—the question of appropriate military institutions for the democratic state—"Not too strong for the liberties of its own people" but "strong enough to maintain its own existence." Would not this be one of the things that "he would study the incidents of . . . as philosophy to learn wisdom from"?

Nor would the solution have been hard to find under Lincoln's method of seeking for the *tap-root*. Might he not say to John Hay, for example, "John, suppose you see if Washington had any thoughts on how a free republic should be defended?"

With such a man as Hay really seeking for it, the quest would not be a long one. Hay would soon find in Marshall's *Life of Washington* that the Father of Our Country, with the aid of his generals, had solved this specific problem in 1783, and that he had made it the basis of his principal legislative programme when he became President. He would find also that Washington's plan was then in the archives of the State Department available to students. Or if he examined Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, he would find in Volume VIII a description of Washington's "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," and how it was prepared at Newburg in 1783, with a new direction as to where to find the original papers. Or if he missed it in Volume VIII of Sparks he would find the clue again in Washington's letter to Baron Steuben published in Volume IX. This in turn would direct him to Baron Steuben's great plan of 1784.

Suppose Hay had brought this vigorous *tap-root* to Lincoln, with Washington's scientific solution of the problem of an army of the people appropriate for a government of and by the people. How quickly he would have grasped it! Nor

[1]His language in 1861 had been: "Is there in all republics this inherent and fatal weakness? Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?"

would it have been bad politics in 1865. It had failed to become law in Washington's day because it might threaten the divine right of secession. And now that political obstacle was gone forever.

And how it would illuminate the burden that Lincoln had borne the past four years! He would see at once that if Washington's plan had been adopted in the beginning, there could have been no Civil War. Indeed if Hay had found this wisdom for him in 1861, he could have ended the War in a year. He could have told Chase and McDowell and Franklin what kind of an army to form. He could have used his professional soldiers primarily to train citizen soldiers as Jefferson Davis did and as Washington proposed to do.

But how would the professional military experts view such a military policy? Would they all embrace it eagerly and abandon the military heresy in which they had been bred? Not all of them, perhaps. But this would make little difference. For the Commanding General, Ulysses S. Grant, would see it. He would find in Washington and Steuben the germ of a permanent national institution embodying the policy he had suggested four years before at Cairo. It would enable him to perpetuate the citizen army of the Civil War as Washington had sought to perpetuate the citizen army of the Revolution. For Grant had clearly recognized the true place of the professional soldier in the modern democratic state—as the guide and teacher of citizen soldiers.

PART IV

A FATEFUL INTERLUDE

CHAPTER XXIV

GENERAL UPTON'S RESEARCHES

I

EARLY in the year 1878, General Emory Upton began the preparation of his book, *The Military Policy of the United States*. In this book he outlined our military history from the beginning of the Revolution to the end of the Civil War. He described the delays and disasters in the conduct of our several wars and traced their underlying causes in our defective military institutions. His book is thus an interpretation of our military history and an argument for the constructive reform of our military system.

General Upton quoted Washington copiously in his book and cited him as his principal authority. His quotations from Washington were the basis of his historical interpretation and the premises upon which he constructed the argument for his proposed reforms. He used Sparks's published *Writings of Washington*, but, unfortunately, he did not examine the important manuscripts which Sparks omitted in making his selections for publication.

Upton's failure to find the full Washingtonian record is the more unfortunate because the pertinent papers were accessible to him when he made his researches. Sparks had omitted Washington's "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," but he called attention to the omission at the proper place in Volume VIII of his *Writings of Washington*. Though General Upton made two excerpts from this same volume, he apparently overlooked this footnote. Had he found it, it should have led him to Washington's own memoir as well as his correspondence with his generals on the subject of national defence. All of these papers were contained in the Washington Manuscripts. At the time of General Upton's researches, they

were in the custody of the State Department and were accessible to students.

As a result of his failure to examine these essential documents, General Upton failed to find any trace of the military policy elaborated by Washington and his generals at Newburg in 1783. Thus, though he based his argument largely upon selections from Washington's writings, he omitted all of Washington's proposals as a constructive military statesman. His book makes no reference to Washington's plans for a "well-regulated" militia and he gives no explanation as to what Washington meant by that phrase. Indeed, Upton's *Military Policy of the United States* is completely silent upon the official military policy repeatedly urged upon Congress by our first four Presidents in seven consecutive administrations.

2

General Upton made his study of Washington's writings at a most significant moment in our history. During the month of June, 1878, General Sherman and General Garfield, then a member of the House, were reading his manuscript chapters on the Revolutionary War.[1] Just at that time, Congress was taking action toward the establishment of sound military institutions for the United States. On June 18th, a Joint Committee of the House and Senate was appointed to study and report upon the national military organization.

This Joint Committee was a highly distinguished body. It was composed of three members of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives, all of whom were veterans of the then recent Civil War. A list of its members with a brief summary of their military records follows:

Senator Ambrose E. Burnside of Rhode Island: Graduated at West Point, 1847: Resigned from the army, 1852: Reëntered the Service in 1861 as colonel of the 1st Rhode Island Volunteers and soon rose to the grade of major general: Commanded the Army of the Potomac at the battle of

[1]This appears from letters from Sherman to Garfield, dated June 23 and June 30, 1878. The author is indebted to Hon. James R. Garfield for copies of these unpublished letters.

Fredericksburg: Though his disastrous defeat at Fredericksburg marked him as unequal to the command of an independent army, he was an able corps commander throughout the War. Senator Burnside was chairman of the Joint Committee which was popularly known as the "Burnside Committee."

Senator Preston B. Plumb of Kansas: Entered the Union Army as a lieutenant of volunteers in 1862 and rose to the grade of lieutenant colonel.

Senator Matthew C. Butler of South Carolina: Entered the Confederate Army as a captain of cavalry in the Hampton Legion in 1861 and rose to the grade of major general.

Hon. Henry B. Banning of Ohio: Enlisted as a private in the Union Army in 1861 and rose to the grade of brevet major general "for gallant and meritorious services during the war."

Hon. George G. Dibrell of Tennessee: Entered the Confederate Army as a private soldier in 1861 and rose to the grade of brigadier general.

Hon. Horace B. Strait of Minnesota: Served as captain and major of the 9th Minnesota Volunteers.

Hon. Harry White of Pennsylvania: Entered the Union Army as major of the 67th Pennsylvania Volunteers in 1861 and was a brevet brigadier general at the close of the war.[1]

The Burnside Committee was eminently qualified to reflect upon the lessons of the Civil War and to embody those lessons in wise military legislation. Both sides of the great struggle were here represented by experienced men who were at once practical soldiers and practical politicians. Between them they covered every phase of the soldier's experience from that of a private soldier to that of an army commander. They had commanded American citizen soldiers on the march and in camp, in victory and defeat. They were all vigorous men still in the prime of life with the memories of a great war still fresh in their minds. The oldest member of the committee, General Dibrell of Tennessee, was only fifty-

[1]Under the Joint Resolution authorizing the Committee, there were to be five members from the House. But only the four above-named signed the report which is published as *Senate Report No. 555, 45th Congress, 3rd Session.*

six years of age. The youngest member, Senator Plumb, was but forty-one. Senator Butler, though he had served as a major general in the Confederate Army, was still a young man of forty-two. Here was an exceptional jury of vigorous practical men eminently equipped to pass upon the problem of national defence. Here was a group of soldier statesmen schooled in the lessons of the Civil War even as Washington and his generals had been schooled in the lessons of the Revolution.

3

General Upton had just completed his study of Washington's writings when the Burnside Committee convened. What a tragedy it was for himself and for his country that he overlooked the whole record of Washington's constructive labors. Suppose he had brought Washington's "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" to the Burnside Committee. Suppose its members had been permitted to read the accompanying memoirs by Steuben, Knox, Pickering, and Rufus Putnam with the letter of instructions from Alexander Hamilton. Suppose they had been able to examine Baron Steuben's plan of 1784 which contained all of the desirable features, and none of the undesirable features, of our present organization under the Act of 1920. How their conceptions of military history and policy must have been illumined by Washington's definition of a "well-regulated" militia. With these papers before them their way to constructive legislation would have been clear. Theirs would have been the opportunity to perpetuate the experience of the Civil War as Washington had sought in vain to perpetuate the experience of the Revolution. What an opportunity for the members of the Burnside Committee as soldiers, as statesmen, and as practical politicians!

For Washington's plan would have been good politics in 1878. All of the political factors that defeated the "well-regulated" militia in the early days of the republic had disappeared. The original issue between Jefferson and Hamilton had long been settled. All Americans were now republicans in the Jeffersonian sense. All believed in government by the

people. The perpetuity and integrity of the Union was no longer an issue. The divine right of secession had been finally annulled by the supreme court of Civil War. And there was no longer an adverse vested interest to oppose a "well-regulated" militia. The inflated militia of the Act of 1792 and the War of 1812 had ceased to exist.

Indeed, practical politics now favored the "well-regulated" militia. Steuben's Continental Militia had spontaneously grown up as a vital institution under the name of the National Guard. Spite of opposition, misrepresentation, and neglect by the federal authorities, it had become a nation-wide organization. In the face of all obstacles it had attained an active strength of 90,000 men. With the plans of Washington and Steuben before it, this must have suggested a practical programme for the Burnside Committee. Here was an opportunity for citizen soldiers of the Civil War to perpetuate a citizen army for the future. Here was an opportunity for practical statesmen to do in 1878 what had been politically impossible in Washington's day. If General Upton had found Washington's constructive programme, we might have had a correct military organization nearly forty years before we entered the World War.

4

As we have seen, General Upton did not find the Washingtonian policy, and therefore could not bring it to the attention of Congress at that time. But unfortunately this was not the most serious consequence of his incomplete researches. He not only failed to find Washington's views but, in effect, he completely misrepresented them. He not only failed to discover Washington's plan for a "well-regulated" militia, but used Washington as his principal expert witness in opposing that institution.

For General Upton's military policy was already firmly settled in his own mind when he began his historical researches. Since 1820, it had been the orthodox view of the military authorities that citizen armies are worthless and that our defence should rest upon an expansible standing army. Upton had absorbed that doctrine at West Point

and that early predilection had recently been confirmed by his observations abroad. During 1876 and 1877, upon the nomination of General Sherman, he had made an official tour of inspection of the principal foreign armies. His official report of his journey with his conclusions bears the date December 15, 1877. It was published in book form early in 1878 under the title, *The Armies of Asia and Europe*.

In this book and in his contemporary correspondence, General Upton's military policy is clearly indicated. He favored an adaptation of the Prussian military system for the United States. He considered the American militia worthless and that it was impossible, under the Constitution, to make it an effective military force. His letters also show that he had undertaken his historical researches in order to establish his major premise—that the militia cannot be made a dependable element of the national defence. He was frankly seeking support for a definitely settled conclusion.

In support of this thesis, General Upton drew largely from the published *Writings of Washington*, as edited by Jared Sparks. There he found numerous letters in which Washington denounced the defects of the Colonial militia as it existed during the Revolutionary War. Again and again Washington had attributed his troubles to the use of short-term local militia instead of troops enlisted for the War. General Upton quoted largely from these letters, and very properly used Washington as an expert witness as to the worthlessness of an "ill-regulated" militia. Then in ignorance of the full record, he jumped to the conclusion that Washington's testimony confirmed his own predetermined remedy —an expansible standing army.

5

We now know that if General Upton had examined the full record he must have found that Washington's conclusions were entirely different from his own. The defects of the Colonial militia were indeed fresh in Washington's mind. But he considered these defects remediable and proposed a simple remedy for them. His remedy for an "ill-regulated" militia

was not an expansible standing army but what he called a "well-regulated" militia. Nor was Washington indulging in glittering generalities. He explained exactly what he meant by a "well-regulated" militia, and how it should be formed.

Nor does Washington agree with General Upton as to the causes for the delays and disasters of the Revolutionary War. According to General Upton, who thinks that Washington agrees with him, they were due to the fact that Congress did not establish a regular army at the beginning of the war. Washington says, on the contrary, that their sole cause was short enlistments in the Continental Army. But was not the Continental Army a regular army? No, not in the Uptonian sense. It was a special organization of the younger militiamen like our present National Guard. From Washington himself, down to the youngest private, it was composed solely of non-professional citizen soldiers. Indeed the regular army as Upton conceived it and as we understand it to-day did not exist until after the War of 1812. There was no such conception in the mind of any intelligent American until long after Washington's day. He did propose a small permanent force as a constabulary for the Indian frontier, but it formed no part of his organization for the national defence. Washington proposed to organize his militia so as to draw from it an effective Continental Army or National Guard when necessary. With a militia "well-regulated" in this sense, Upton's expansible standing army would be entirely unnecessary.

But while the full Washingtonian record completely demolishes Upton's argument, by using only a part of that record, Upton makes it appear that he has Washington's sanction. He cites page after page of Washington's denunciation of certain abuses. He then omits all reference to Washington's constructive remedy for these abuses and elaborates another which is entirely different in kind. This gives the impression that his remedy and Washington's are the same. It is probable that no constructive statesman in history was ever more completely misrepresented than is George Washington in Emory Upton's book. It entirely omits all reference to Washington's constructive plan and uses his authority

and prestige to exploit and promote another plan entirely different in kind—a plan, indeed, which Washington and his advisers had deliberately rejected as unnecessary, ineffective, extravagant, and inconsistent with the genius of republican institutions.

6

And so Washington's military policy was not submitted to the Burnside Committee. But its members were well primed with the orthodox military doctrine. General Sherman, who was then in command of the Army, sent them a mass of literature including his own scheme for an expansible standing army. This plan was based on the orthodox Scott-Calhoun plan of 1820. But General Sherman was much more expansive than his military ancestors ever dreamed of being. They had proposed to expand the regular army in the ratio of 1 to 3. Sherman's ratio was more than 1 to 7. He proposed to pass from a peace strength of 27,630 to a maximum war strength of 213,570. How he expected this dropsical regular army to absorb and carry that much surplus water and still be fit for immediate duty as a regular army is not clear from the record.[1]

And General Sherman was apparently glad to find that Upton's denatured Washington supported his own military policy. He brought Upton's manuscript to General Garfield's attention. In a letter[2] to Garfield on June 30th, he wrote:

> I have received your letter of the 27th and am pleased to see that you value Upton's final chapters on "Military Policy" [*this refers to certain chapters relating to the Revolutionary War*]. . . . I now send you at his request three additional chapters not quite up to the Standard of the first, yet a part of the chain which leads up to his conclusion.

[1]Upton was not quite so expansive as General Sherman. In his *Armies of Asia and Europe* he proposed a peace strength of 22,825 in his infantry, cavalry, and artillery, to be expanded to a war strength of 139,630. See page 145 for General Hancock's denunciation of this expansible standing army scheme. This also was considered by the Burnside Committee.

[2]From the unpublished Garfield Papers. The author is indebted to Hon. James R. Garfield for a copy of this letter.

I will write him today reiterating the great importance of condensation but I confess that the order in which he proceeds unfolds Washington's most admirable opinion as contained in his voluminous correspondence and does not admit of much condensation. I don't know where these paragraphs can be had, segregated from the vast mass of letters discussing every other conceivable subject. *So I still advise Upton to quote largely from Washington*, an authority that even R——[1] or R——[1] would not venture to assail.

In another letter[2] Sherman had written Garfield:

Our Members of Congress assume as a fact not susceptible of discussion that Volunteers & Militia are the cheapest and best kind of soldiers, and therefore a Regular Army is abnormal to our system and Extravagant in a financial sense. I like Upton's method of connecting Washington's testimony so as to make a logical and connected chain, and this he can keep up until 1798. . . . He [Washington] was in fact the Father of the Military Academy, and of the Regular Army.

If Washington's real views had been communicated to him, how surprised General Sherman must have been. He would have found that these benighted Members of Congress were really asserting the creed of the Father of their Country. And he must have qualified his statement that Washington was the "Father of the Military Academy and of the Regular Army." For Washington's conception of these two institutions was totally different from Sherman's. And how the "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" would have shattered Upton's "logical and connected chain."

On July 5th General Upton, after finishing his studies of Washington's writings, wrote[3] to General Garfield that his object was to induce "the abandonment of our present system," that he favored an expansible regular army as an army of the first line, to be supported by national volunteers

[1]These names are illegible in the manuscript letter. The italics are mine.

[2]Letter dated June 23, 1878. The author is indebted to Hon. James R. Garfield for a copy of this letter.

[3]This letter is in the unpublished Garfield Papers. The author is indebted to Hon. James R. Garfield for a copy of it.

like the German *Landwehr*, and that he would employ the militia only as a third line in the event of actual invasion.

In his reply to this letter, on July 22nd, General Garfield wrote:[1]

> Your plan for a National army, modeled somewhat on the German plan of a regular active force, *Landwehr* and *Landsturm*, is excellent and I hope you will work it out so fully in its details that we can embody it in a bill to be introduced into Congress. I am satisfied we shall never be able to organize an effective national militia on the old plan.

What a pity it was that James A. Garfield, the statesman and veteran of the Civil War, was not permitted to see Washington's plan for perfecting the citizen army of the Revolution! It was indeed a denatured Washington that could induce such a man to favor a Prussian military system for the United States. Here General Garfield appears as one of many American statesmen who for two generations were to be misled and misinformed by incomplete and uncritical history.

7

How could General Upton have failed to find the record of Washington's constructive labors on military policy? For he must have failed to find it. Had he discovered these important papers he must at least have described them in his book. He could not have suppressed all reference to Washington's "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" in his own book on national military policy. Indeed, had he found them, it is almost certain that he must have been strongly influenced by them. With them as a clew he must have found a new interpretation of our whole military history. He must have found that there was no historical foundation for the orthodox Calhoun-Scott military policy in which he had been bred. In short, if General Upton had found the Washingtonian record, his *Military Policy of the United States* must have laid the foundations for a sound national system in 1878.

[1]Michie's *Life and Letters of Emory Upton*, p. 451.

His failure was partly due to preformed opinions. His views on what our military policy should be were fixed and had all the strength of life-long conviction. It probably never occurred to him that another and better solution could be buried in our history. But he did believe unquestioningly that by searching history he could collect arguments that would convince his countrymen. He therefore went into the past in order to accumulate an overwhelming mass of evidence in support of a position which he believed to be unassailable. It never entered his mind that that position itself rested upon questionable historical foundations. He frankly approached his task not as a critical historian but as a conscientious, patriotic propagandist.

With this object in view, speed was a determining factor. He believed that he had a message for his countrymen that should be submitted to them without delay. He was on duty at Fort Monroe where, for the time being, he had facilities for study and clerical assistance. Such advantages could be only temporary in the life of a regular army officer. He must therefore speed his labors while this opportunity lasted. He therefore worked at high speed and it was probably this high speed that prevented his discovery of Washington's legacy.

After General Upton's return from his foreign tour of inspection, he was assigned to duty as military instructor at the Artillery School at Fort Monroe. He reported for duty there March 1, 1877. During the year, though busy with his important duties as instructor, he wrote his voluminous report on the foreign armies and military establishments which he had inspected. On the first of April he wrote to his friend Colonel Henry A. DuPont:[1]

> My report is yet to be written. I doubt not it will disappoint many people, as I intend to expose the vices of our system, instead of simply describing the organizations abroad.

Upton finished his report before the end of the year and transmitted it to the War Department on the 15th of December. But while he was still working upon this report, his

[1]Michie, *Life and Letters of Emory Upton*, p. 418.

mind had turned toward another project. On the 30th of September he wrote to DuPont:[1]

> . . . I am going to trace our military policy from the beginning of the Revolutionary War to the present time, and, if possible, expose its folly and criminality. In reading over Washington's letters, I find many valuable descriptions of the very system that we are pursuing today.

I have been unable to determine when General Upton began the actual writing of his *Military Policy of the United States*. But his early progress is indicated in another letter[1] to Colonel DuPont, dated April 11, 1878, in which he says:

> . . . I have, as I have already informed you, the intention of writing a book called "The Military Policy of the United States," but by severely quoting from history it would so bear down upon the militia as to make such an uproar as possibly to destroy the value of the book. . . . I have a large amount of material already collected and arranged. Tell me what you think of the project.

The progess of the book after April 11th was extremely rapid. As we have seen, General Sherman and General Garfield were in correspondence on some of the Revolutionary War chapters as early as June 23rd. On July 5th, in a letter to General Garfield, General Upton wrote, "Today I send to General Sherman the remainder of the Revolution," and toward the close of the same letter, "Today I finish the War of 1812." This is less than three months since he had informed Colonel DuPont that he contemplated writing the book and had collected and arranged a mass of material for it. During these few weeks General Upton had written a history of the military institutions of the United States from the beginning of the Revolutionary War to the end of the War of 1812.

Is it surprising that this left little time for the examination of original documents? Nor from the author's point of view was there any occasion for it. He found that Washington's

[1]Michie, *Upton*, 419.

published writings "would so bear down upon the militia" that any further evidence from him would probably be merely cumulative and superfluous. In the pressure of transcribing the great mass of printed testimony, Upton must have overlooked Sparks's footnote calling attention to the constructive material which he had omitted.

8

In September, 1878, General Garfield wrote to General Upton as follows:

DEAR GENERAL:

I brought your manuscript of the military policy of the United States from the Revolution till 1812 with me to Maine, and have read it carefully and with great interest. I have suggested a few things on the margin, and would make only the further suggestion: *it would add great force to your exhibit if you could find and quote a few crisp passages from the messages of Presidents, the reports of Secretaries of War, and from the debates in Congress, setting forth the evils of army organization complained of in your chapter from the Revolution to 1812. I am sure you will have no difficulty in finding them.* The chapter is an admirable one, and greatly adds to the value of your book. I send the manuscript by express to Fortress Monroe.

Very truly yours,
J. A. GARFIELD.[1]

In this letter General Upton received a valuable suggestion which for some reason he did not adopt. All of the Presidents from Washington to Madison had urged the adoption of a well-regulated militia. General Upton cited none of these messages though they were all accessible in 1878 in printed form. After denouncing the Militia Act of 1792, as he very properly did, General Upton might have called attention to the fact that this law did not meet Washington's approval, and that in his next annual message and in every subsequent general message to Congress he urged the adoption of a sound militia system precisely as if Congress had not passed any

[1]Michie, *Upton*, p. 452. The italics are mine.

militia legislation. In his message of 1794 Washington, in again urging militia reform, specifically calls attention to the defects of the existing system as they had been exposed in the recent Whisky Rebellion in Pennsylvania. If he had examined these Presidental Messages General Upton must have seen that the militia of the Act of 1792 which he so justly denounced was also denounced by Washington, who repeatedly sought to reform it. This is a highly pertinent fact relating to Washington's attitude on the militia.

Militia reform was also urged by John Adams. But the omission of the detailed militia organization proposed in the messages of Presidents Jefferson and Madison is particularly significant. Both of these Presidents specifically and repeatedly urged a classification of the militia so that the younger men could be given separate organization and training in time of peace. Here they specifically advocated the essential feature of Washington's "well-regulated" militia, as defined in his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" in 1783 and as he sought to establish it throughout his administration as President. Madison urged this well-regulated militia as the only effective preparedness for the approaching war with Great Britain. He urged it again after the bitter experience of that war as the only military institution essential to our future security. That there is no reference to any of these messages in General Upton's book is a most serious criticism. That he should denounce the militia as an incorrigible and hopeless institution and make no reference to the fact that every President from 1789 to 1817 had urged its reform upon every Congress during that period, is an unpardonable omission of essential military history. His failure to find Washington's original plan in a mass of unpublished manuscripts may perhaps be excused, but not his omission of the official military recommendations of four successive Presidents in seven successive administrations.

9

Nothing was accomplished by the labors of the Burnside Committee. As we have seen, Washington's constructive

proposals were not submitted to it. As practical politicians as well as experienced soldiers, its members found nothing valuable in the official scheme for an expansible standing army submitted to them by General Sherman. Even though Sherman was now strongly supported by Upton's pseudo-Washington, there was nothing in the scheme to appeal to the intelligence or the self-respect of American statesmen who had served as citizen soldiers throughout a great war.

One of the most interesting papers considered by the Burnside Committee was a letter from General McClellan to Senator Burnside. In the course of this letter General McClellan said:

> . . . All of our experience has shown that in the event of war we cannot rely upon the militia as such, but upon such individual members of that vast body as offer to serve and from corps of volunteers, and upon regiments of "National Guards." I would earnestly commend to the careful thought of the committee the propriety of encouraging the formation of such corps in the various States and of assisting them as much as possible.
>
> For instance, I would suggest that the present annual appropriation of $200,000 for arming and equipping the militia be considerably increased, and that the increase at least (if not the whole amount) be divided among those States which maintain a well-organized and efficient National Guard, in proportion to the number of efficient troops so maintained during the preceding year, and that the number be ascertained by actual inspection by United States officers. Other means will no doubt suggest themselves to the committee to encourage the organization and promote the efficiency of a class of troops upon whom should devolve the preservation of order within the States, who would as a body render good service upon the outbreak of war, and furnish a very considerable number of good officers toward the formation of additional regiments in time of need.[1]

In the first sentence of the foregoing excerpt, General McClellan gives an accurate critical summary of the military history of the United States. He also makes precisely the

[1]From Report of Burnside Committee, p. 458.

same distinction between an unregulated militia and a "well-regulated" militia that Washington made in his plan of 1783. In his second paragraph, General McClellan points out and recommends a practical means of developing the National Guard. It is highly significant that after more than a generation of discouragement, misrepresentation, and resistance on the part of the federal military authorities, the government has finally adopted General McClellan's policy. What a pity it is that Steuben's scientific plan for a Continental Militia or National Guard did not come before the Burnside Committee at the same time.

General Upton was less optimistic with regard to the value and future prospects of the militia. In his recently published *Armies of Asia and Europe* he had said:

> The fact however that the active militia numbers but 90,000, and that the States collectively, appropriate scarcely a million dollars for its support, while many make no appropriation whatever, affords conclusive proof that the expectations based upon the militia cannot be realized.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The impossibility of forming a trained reserve as in Europe, and the certainty that the States cannot be relied upon to support a numerous and well organized body of militia, *even with the aid of the 200,000 dollars appropriated annually by the government*, should impress us with the importance of devising some method whereby both in peace and war, we may have a national force ready to increase and support our troops in the field.[1]

But looking on the foregoing paragraphs retrospectively they presented little ground for pessimism. If a nation could have a force of 90,000 citizen soldiers eager to serve and undergoing training at an annual charge of only two dollars and twenty-two cents per man and in spite of official discouragement and neglect, what might it not do with a reasonable outlay under a policy of intelligent encouragement? Indeed General Upton's statement of the facts fully confirmed

[1]Upton, *Armies of Asia and Europe*, p. 367. The italics are mine.

Washington's assertion of 1783 that "there are a sufficient proportion of able-bodied young men . . . who, from a natural fondness for military parade (which passion is almost ever prevalent at that period of life), might easily be enlisted or drafted to form a Corps in every State, capable of resisting any sudden impression which might be attempted."

What a difference between the attitude of the military authorities under Washington in 1783 and under Sherman in 1878! In 1783 they were exerting every effort to establish a well-regulated militia. In 1878 they were exerting every effort to discredit that institution and to prevent its establishment. If the War Department after the Civil War had sought to remedy the defects of the militia half as strenuously as it sought to exploit them as part of its standing army propaganda, we should have had a sound system of national defence forty years before we entered the World War.

10

It is the argument of Upton's *Military Policy of the United States* that our military disasters and delays were due to the fact that our people unwisely relied upon militia and were therefore unwilling to maintain a standing army large enough to meet our defensive requirements. This argument, as we have seen, rests upon incomplete and uncritical historical research. Upton rested his argument upon Washington's severe criticism of the ill-regulated local militia as it existed during the Revolution. But Upton did not find Washington's constructive plan. He used Washington's symptomology but made no reference to his accurate diagnosis or his scientific remedy. He did not find that the application of this remedy was the principal objective of Washington's life work as a constructive statesman from the close of the Revolution until his death. He did not find that this same plan had been consistently urged by Jefferson and Madison as the only adequate form of national security.

Upton therefore completely missed the true interpretation of the War of the Revolution, the War of 1812, and of all our subsequent military history to the end of the Civil War. Had

he found these essential foundations of our military history he must have seen that all of our military misfortunes were due solely to the fact that our fathers did not establish a "well-regulated" militia as recommended by Washington.

II

General Upton failed to find a publisher for his book. He died at the Presidio of San Francisco early in 1881. But a summary of his literary work appeared in *The Life and Letters of Emory Upton*, by Professor Peter S. Michie, published in 1885. In the Introduction to this book, written by General James H. Wilson, we have the following estimate of General Upton as a soldier:

> Upton was as good an artillery officer as could be found in any country, the equal of any Cavalry Commander of his day, and, all things considered, was the best commander of a division of infantry in either the Union or the rebel army. He was the equal of Custer or Kilpatrick in dash and enterprise, and vastly the superior of either in discipline and administration, whether on the march or in the camp. He was incontestably the best tactician in either army, and this is true whether tested by battle or by the evolutions of the drill field and parade. . . . No one can read the story of his brilliant career without concluding that he had a real genius for war, together with all the theoretical and practical knowledge which anyone could acquire in regard to it.

After referring to Upton's tour of military observation abroad, General Wilson says:

> Upon his return from this tour he was assigned to duty at the Artillery School of Practice as instructor of the Art of War, and, while thus engaged, prepared and published the report of his observations in Europe and began his work on the "Military Policy of the United States." *During this period he analyzed critically all the records of the Government in relation to the wars in which it had been engaged, from the beginning of the Revolution to the end of the rebellion of the slave States.*[1]

[1]The italics are mine.

Professor Michie read the manuscript of *The Military Policy of the United States* while he was preparing his life of its author and published a summary of it in his Chapter XI. Referring to its origin he said:

> He [Upton] was led to the study of our military history, and to seek the causes of our existing military policy, in contrasting the condition of our Army with those of other countries. *He very soon found that a thorough mastery of his subject necessitated careful historical research, a close scrutiny of recorded events, and an unsparing sacrifice of all his leisure time.*[1] But he also was convinced that he had happened on a mine which, properly worked, would yield a treasure of the greatest value to his profession, and, above all, to his country. He therefore resolved to undertake its systematic development.

Professor Michie's testimony fully confirmed that of General Wilson. They both believed that Upton's researches were exhaustive and critical. They both found in his book a vast accumulation of facts in support of the orthodox military policy in which they had been bred. Neither of them could have known that there were fatal defects of omission in the record. Therefore, in good faith, they laid the foundations of the legend that Upton's *Military Policy of the United States* is based upon exhaustive and critical historical research.

But though in 1885 Professor Michie had called attention to the importance of *The Military Policy of the United States*, it still remained unpublished. It lay buried in manuscript form until it was published as an official document nearly twenty years later.

[1]The italics are mine.

CHAPTER XXV

ELIHU ROOT

I

On the first of August, 1899, a great lawyer and constructive statesman, Elihu Root, became Secretary of War. He immediately approached the problem of reforming our military system as he would have approached the problem of reforming a bankrupt railroad corporation. He analyzed our military defects as they had manifested themselves in the recent War with Spain and traced them to their source in a faulty organization of the War Department. In proposing his reforms later to the Senate Military Committee he said:

> Now, I want to say that I believe that with the organization as it was at the outbreak of the War with Spain and is now, the outbreak of any war would irretrievably ruin any man who was Secretary of War. I think the organization is such that it is impossible that successful results shall be produced until they have been worked out by the most painful and expensive experience. They will come in time because the American people will get up a jury-rigged, extempore organization,[1] which will be adapted to the circumstances, but you will not have had forethought and prevision and prearrangement and an understanding of what was going to be done unless you get a different organization in time of peace.

The defective organization to which Secretary Root referred had been in existence for many years. It was defined in Army Regulations as follows:

> The Military Establishment is under orders of the Commanding General of the Army in that which pertains to its discipline and military control. The fiscal affairs of the Army are conducted by the Secretary of War through the several Staff Departments.

[1]As they eventually did under Abraham Lincoln in the Civil War.

Here, in short, still existing after the Spanish-American War, was the dual control which had been the source of confusion and misunderstanding since the War of 1812.

The solution was obvious. The Secretary of War should be the supreme head of the military establishment under the President. There should be no commanding general independent of the secretary in any sense. The senior general at the War Department should be the responsible adviser and executive agent of the secretary, serving not as a commander in his own right, but as the chief of staff of his civil superior.

2

But while the soundness of this theory of organization is obvious to us to-day, it was regarded as a dangerous innovation in 1902. The weight of military experience and authority was apparently against it. In opposing it, General Miles was able to assert that Secretary Root was siding with Marcy and Jefferson Davis as against Winfield Scott, with Stanton as against McClellan and Grant, and with Belknap as against General Sherman. This argument made a strong appeal to the members of the Military Committees until their attention was drawn to the opinion of General Schofield, who had preceded General Miles as Commanding General of the Army. In his recent testimony before the "Dodge Commission"[1] appointed to investigate the conduct of the War with Spain, General Schofield had said:

> Recent experience has served to confirm all the results of my life-long study and large experience that the proper position for the senior officer on duty at Washington is not that of commanding general, a position which is practically impossible, but that of general in chief,[2] which means in fact Chief of Staff to the President. . . .

[1]The Report of this Commission is published as *Senate Document No. 221, Fifty-sixth Congress, 1st Session.*

[2]This, it will be recalled, is the position that General Halleck occupied in the organization which President Lincoln finally *jury-rigged* in July, 1862. It is also the position that General Lee occupied under President Davis when he reorganized the Confederate armies in the spring of 1862.

> When I became the commanding general I addressed to the President a letter, in which I pointed out to him what had been the result of my study and experience, and saying that the only way was to abandon entirely, which I did during all my seven years of service, all pretense of being the commanding general and to content myself with acting as the Chief of Staff of the Army under the Secretary of War and the President. The result was that perfect harmony prevailed during my time, and I did exercise a legitimate influence in command of the Army, this because I did not claim to exercise anything which the law did not give me.

The foregoing statement by General Schofield had led the "Dodge Commission" to the conclusion that:

> The President must have the same power of selection of his general in chief as he has of his Secretary of War;[1] without this there can be no guaranty that he will give, or that the Secretary of War will place in the general in chief, that confidence which is necessary to perfect harmony.

While Secretary Root supported his position by other powerful arguments, it is probable that General Schofield's statement of actual experience was conclusive with Congress and with the country. General Schofield was the only commanding general of the army in the history of that office who had worked in harmony with his civil superior. And this, by his own testimony, was because he had not tried to be commanding general. In proposing to establish his new office of chief of staff, Mr. Root was simply proposing to perpetuate the benefits of General Schofield's successful experiment. Congress adopted the secretary's recommendation. The office of chief of staff was created by "An Act to increase the Efficiency of the Army," approved February 14, 1903.[2]

[1]General Miles became Commanding General by virtue of seniority upon the retirement of General Schofield in 1895. President McKinley, in 1898, was therefore in the position of commanding the army through an officer not of his own selection.

[2]In his labors for the reform of the War Department and the establishment of the General Staff Corps, Secretary Root was ably assisted by Colonel (later Major General) William H. Carter. General Carter's account of these great reforms is given in *Senate Document No. 119, 68th Congress, 1st Session*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1924.

This was the first of Secretary Root's great reforms. For the first time since the founding of the government, the military establishment was given an effective overhead organization by law. For the first time, the President was able to exercise his constitutional military command through a responsible military agent fully subordinate to the supreme civil authority.

3

Secretary Root also brought another defect to the attention of Congress. His investigation of the recent Spanish-American War, and indeed our whole military history, had shown that there was no planning agency in the War Department. There was no body of officers, free from executive and administrative responsibility, charged with the deliberate preparation of plans for the national defence. In the Spanish-American War, as in all of our past wars, plans had been hastily extemporized on the eve of a military emergency. There had been no provision, as Mr. Root expressed it, for "forethought and prevision and prearrangement" and no "understanding of what was going to be done." That the plans should have been defective was not surprising under the circumstances. They were not only extemporized but were extemporized in haste by officers who were already overburdened by other responsible duties. The secretary therefore proposed the establishment of a planning agency which he called a *General Staff*. Congress adopted his recommendation and authorized a General Staff Corps in the same Act which established the office of Chief of Staff. This was the second of Secretary Root's great reforms. For the first time in the history of the country, a group of selected officers was set apart to study our military policy and to make scientific plans for the national defence.

It would scarcely be possible to overestimate the importance of these two great reforms by Secretary Root. In them, he established a sound system of control and a machinery for making policies and plans. When we consider that the War Department had neither of these agencies in 1861, we account at once for most of Abraham Lincoln's difficulties.

He had superior military resources, but he was unable to use them effectively. If he had been given an intelligent plan to approve and a competent, responsible, and subordinate chief of staff to execute it, the Confederacy could hardly have survived the early spring of 1862. When an organism has no *brain* to discover the way to go and no *will* to make it follow that way even when found, it is not far advanced from the primitive protoplasm. Secretary Root therefore took the first step toward higher evolution. He gave the War Department a responsible *will* and an organized *brain*.

4

But a third great reform still lay before Secretary Root. He must organize the American War Army. He saw that in the future as in the past we must fight our wars with citizen armies. But in the past these war armies had been extemporized after war had come. This must be corrected in a sound organization for the future. The great war army of citizen soldiers must be organized and sufficiently trained in time of peace for effective defence at the outbreak of war. With this accomplished the American military system would be complete. Here was the first and most important problem for Root's new planning agency.

As a first step toward a solution of this great problem, the new general staff should have examined our military history. It should have studied our past wars and the causes of our military errors. It should have examined the past to see if the founders of our government had left any message of military wisdom. And, especially, it should have consulted the great soldier-statesman who won our independence and laid the foundations of our government. In short, the first labor of Secretary Root's scientific planning agency should have been an inquiry into Washington's military policy.

Their first discovery would have been a remarkable paradox. In examining Washington's published writings they would have found an astonishing change in his attitude toward the militia. During the Revolution he denounced it

as a "broken reed." After the war he urged its development as "the palladium of our security." After he became President he asserted that "a well-regulated militia" would meet "every military exigency of the United States." This would present some remarkable questions to Mr. Root's scientific planning agency. What did Washington mean by a "well-regulated" militia? How did he propose to convert the "broken reed" of 1776 into the "palladium of security" of 1783?

As the published writings of Washington would give no clear answer to these questions, what would be the next step in the labors of our new General Staff? The answer is obvious. One of the new embryo Moltkes would raise the question, "Why not examine Washington's unpublished manuscripts?" Another would add, "Why, of course, there must be something more. Old Sparks says here in his preface that he only had room for a part of the more popular stuff. Hadn't we better look at the original papers?"

And so one of our embryo Moltkes would be detailed to examine the Washington Manuscripts in the Library of Congress.[1] Let us suppose that he visited the Library on a Monday morning. About Wednesday of the same week he would return to his chief with the following remarkable report:

"General, I have just come back from the Library of Congress where I found a remarkable record. It shows that General Washington himself held a general staff conference at his headquarters at Newburg in April, 1783, just at the end of the Revolutionary War. He called on his generals for their views on military policy. Their replies are there and Washington's own report to Congress. Why, General, he gives a complete military policy of the United States. He explains in detail what he meant by a 'well-regulated' militia. It throws a new light on his administration as President and on all of our military history. I must confess that he rather upsets some of our old notions, but I think

[1]The *Washington Papers* were transferred from the State Department to the Library of Congress during the month of March, 1903. The transfer order is dated March 3, 1903.

we ought to make copies of these papers and that you ought to show them to Secretary Root."

Imagine such a record submitted to Elihu Root in 1903, when Theodore Roosevelt was President of the United States —Washington's original policy with Steuben's plan for perfecting the National Guard and his scheme of territorial organization such as we have to-day and his plans for nation-wide military education. Imagine how these documents would crystallize in the mind of Theodore Roosevelt—as a historian, as a citizen soldier, as a statesman, and, above all, as a practical politician. Can there be any doubt of the result? He would submit Washington's plan of national defence to the American Congress and to the American people. Elihu Root's constructive labors could then be completed. His newly organized *brain* and *will* would vitalize Washington's Army of the People. We should have had a National Defence Act like the Act of 1920 (but better and simpler) a dozen years before we entered the World War.

5

But unfortunately the new planning agency was diverted from this great constructive opportunity. About the time the General Staff was formed, General Upton's manuscript was brought to the attention of its members. Apparently there was no need for further historical research. Apparently that labor was already done. Here was a voluminous record of our military development, based on the authority of Washington himself and extending from the Revolution to the Civil War. The manuscript itself bore the written endorsement of General Sherman. Two great authorities, Professor Peter S. Michie and General James H. Wilson, vouched for its authority, as based upon exhaustive and critical historical research. Here was the Washingtonian record already compiled and digested for the General Staff. It served the purpose fully, especially as it introduced Washington as a witness against the militia heresy and in support of the orthodox panacea, an expansible standing army.

It was therefore not Washington, but Upton's denatured

Washington, that was submitted to Elihu Root. On the high testimony of Sherman and Michie and Wilson he accepted the Uptonian manuscript as a critical and exhaustive contribution to our military history. He determined to rescue it from oblivion. He therefore caused its official publication as a War Department document. In a preface written by himself he said:

> The work was written from a purely military point of view, and in some parts shows a failure to appreciate difficulties arising from our form of government and the habits and opinions of our people with which civil government has necessarily to deal in its direction of the military arm. On some points it is colored by the strong feelings natural to a man who had been a participant in the great conflict of the Civil War, then but recently ended, and who himself had taken part in the serious controversies regarding the men and deeds of that struggle. *But the work exhibits the results of such thorough and discriminating research, such a valuable marshaling of the facts of our military history, and such sound and ably-reasoned conclusions from those facts as to the defects and needs of our military system, that it clearly ought to be made available for the study of our officers and for the information of all who may be charged with shaping our military policy in the future.*[1]

So published, with the highest official and personal sanction, Upton's book has molded opinion with reference to our military history and institutions for a quarter of a century. Its acceptance as a monument of *thorough and discriminating research* was so complete that it closed the door to further inquiry. Army officers, historians, and statesmen have accepted it as conclusive authority on the facts of our military history. And on the basis of the facts, so presented, Upton's doctrine as to national military organization has been widely accepted as the orthodox statement of the proper military policy for the United States.

But unfortunately, as we have seen, Secretary Root was mistaken in his belief that General Upton's work was the result of thorough and discriminating research. It omits all

[1]The italics are mine.

reference to the constructive military organization elaborated by Washington and his generals and supported by all of the statesmen and soldiers who founded our nation. And worse, by citing copiously from only a portion of the record it completely misinterprets the facts of our history. The effect is that General Upton not only suppresses Washington's own military system, but cites him as an expert witness in behalf of another system that he had carefully considered and definitely rejected as ineffective, extravagant, and inconsistent with the genius of our institutions.

It was his official endorsement of Upton that defeated the completion of Secretary Root's constructive programme. At the very moment of its establishment, his new planning agency was definitely committed to a false policy. Its future influence would now be persistently in a wrong direction. Completely ignorant of Washington's "well-regulated" militia and of the true interpretation of our military history, it was now destined to follow Upton in his pursuit of a Prussian model.

6

It was bad enough that the new planning agency was committed to the preparation of unsound plans. But that was not the only handicap to progress. The new planning agency bore the general staff label but it was not a general staff in fact because its members were not general staff officers. There was not an officer in the American Army in 1903 who had been trained for general staff duties. Indeed only a few American officers knew enough about the general staff institution to know that they knew nothing about it at all.

The situation had been just the reverse of this at Washington's headquarters. He had a general staff in fact though it did not bear the general staff label. Baron Steuben had been carefully trained in general staff duties by Frederick the Great himself. He brought this highly specialized institution to Washington a hundred and twenty-one years before Elihu Root became Secretary of War. With many other officers who, like himself, had been trained under the Baron's

doctrine and example, Washington had a highly competent general staff. If he had been able to perpetuate the Baron's military organization and his system of military education, we should have had a scientific general staff as a continuing institution from the beginning of our national history.

Secretary Root was aware of the inadequate training of his new general staff officers and proposed to correct it through special military education. Through his new War College and the development of the Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, he hoped eventually to have a general staff in fact. But in the meantime he must do the best that he could with the existing personnel. With carefully selected officers of ability assigned to his planning agency, it should be able to accomplish much. A body of competent officers, carefully selected and set apart and diligently employed on general staff duties, would gradually acquire wisdom and skill in the school of practice.

7

But there was still another obstacle to the healthy growth of our infant General Staff. As we have seen, the Act of 1903 created two distinct agencies—a new planning body known as the General Staff, and a new executive agency, the office of Chief of Staff. There was some danger of confusion in the fact that these two entirely distinct institutions were created at the same time and by the same Act of Congress. There was further danger of confusion in the fact that the new Chief of Staff was also to be chief of the new General Staff Corps. And there was still further danger of confusion in the fact that the new Chief of Staff was authorized to detach general staff officers from general staff duties, proper, to assist him in his duties as executive assistant to the Secretary of War.

This was all right in theory, but it led to serious difficulties in practice. If Secretary Root could have had Baron Steuben as his first Chief of Staff there would have been no confusion. A trained general staff officer like Steuben could and would have kept the two eggs separate without risk of scrambling them together. He would understand clearly that his job as

Chief of Staff to the Secretary of War was entirely distinct from his job as Chief of the General Staff. He would insist that his new general staff officers should busy themselves with general staff duties and that they should waste no more time than absolutely necessary in the ephemeral demands of War Department administration. He would recognize clearly that the new agency had *not* been created for that purpose.

But unfortunately, Secretary Root could not have a Baron Steuben to establish his new general staff. There was no general officer of that type in the whole American Army. The first Chief of Staff was General Young. He was a highly capable and efficient soldier, but neither he nor any other general then in the army had had any specific training for that particular job. He and his immediate successors knew little or nothing about the modern general staff institution but they did know something about bossing the bureaus. They hadn't the faintest idea how to assign young officers to general staff duties, but they did know how to use them to butt in on the business of the Chief of Engineers and the Quartermaster General.

Indeed, the very name, *General Staff*, was misleading and gave a false impression of the duties of the new Corps. If Baron Steuben had translated the word "*generalstab*" into English, he would have called it a "*general's staff*" or a "*generalship staff*" or a "*military operations staff*." He would never have called it a "*general* staff." The adjective "*general*" implies a sort of universal application—as in "*general* manager"—something quite foreign to the meaning of the original German phrase. The current notion of a general staff officer in those days was that he was a sort of *general busybody*, which, in fact, he generally was. Indeed it must be confessed that our infant General Staff neglected to do many of the things that a general staff ought to do because it was very busy doing many things that a general staff never ought to do. Let us hope that in its maturity it has learned to avoid this alluring form of dissipation which, according to the Prayer Book, is so highly detrimental to spiritual health.

8

Secretary Root realized clearly that full general staff efficiency must wait upon the special training of general staff officers. He therefore did all in his power to stimulate professional education. But the foundations of our system of post-graduate schools were laid long before his administration as Secretary of War. We have seen that General Upton was an instructor of military science at the Artillery School as early as 1877. A similar school for infantry and cavalry officers was established at Fort Leavenworth in 1881. At first this school was regarded as a more or less elementary school for the benefit of officers who had not graduated at West Point. The importance of systematic post-graduate training was not fully appreciated until later. Secretary Root completed the educational structure by establishing the War College at Washington in 1903.

From the very beginning, these post-graduate schools exerted a great influence upon the army. Here mature officers were given an opportunity to study military history and the art of war, free from the distractions of petty routine administration. Under General Upton, for example, selected artillery officers were able to profit from the teachings and experience of one of the most accomplished veterans of the Civil War. They were able to escape from the petty problems of post and company administration and to read and reflect upon the larger problems of their profession. At a time when the regular army was a congeries of scattered companies with little or no higher organization, they were permitted to think, at least, in terms of army corps and divisions. A year or two of daily contact with their instructors and with their fellow students in such an atmosphere had an immense educational value. In appraising the merits of our modern War College and General Service Schools we are prone to underestimate the great value of the older school at Fort Leavenworth. Crude as its curriculum was in many respects, it gave what able officers most needed, an opportunity to escape from petty service routine in order to read and think.

Indeed, to a really able officer, the best modern curriculum can offer little more. Even at the old Infantry and Cavalry School, the student officers enjoyed opportunities for professional training that McClellan and Grant and Lee and Sherman and Longstreet and Thomas and Ewell never had. What they garnered at the school depended upon what they took there with them. A really able officer brought a richer harvest from the old Leavenworth than a mediocre officer can bring from the new.

9

Shortly before the Spanish-American War a great reform was initiated at Fort Leavenworth. One of the instructors, Captain Eben Swift,[1] introduced a new course in tactical orders. In his studies of the Civil War, Captain Swift had discovered that many defects and failures could be traced, not merely to bad tactics, but to the lack of clear and intelligible instructions to the troops. He was particularly impressed by the orders that were issued to the Confederate Army before the Battle of Shiloh. General A. S. Johnston had ordered his army "to march, assemble and take order of battle" for attack, while he and his forces were still at Corinth, a good day's march from the ground from which he proposed to "jump off." As Captain Swift stated in one of his lectures:

> The order . . . now occupies about three pages in the Rebellion Records. It contained about 1500 words. It reminded one major-general,[2] who, by the way, was himself the author of a system of tactics, that he must "make a proper distribution of artillery along the line of battle, remembering that the rifled guns are of long range, and should be placed in commanding positions in rear of his infantry, to fire mainly upon reserves and the second line of the enemy, but occasionally will be directed on his batteries and heads of columns."
>
> Another major-general,[3] a veteran who had served twenty-five years, was told how to form his regiments into line, but was permitted to place his artillery to suit himself, possibly in

[1]Now Brigadier General Eben Swift, U. S. Army, retired.

[2]General Hardee, commanding the Third Corps.

[3]General Bragg, commanding the Second Corps.

deference to the popular idea that his battery had saved the day at Buena Vista, fourteen years previously. The order provided for a number of small detachments, for camp guards, for repair of bridges and roads, and closed with an appeal to the patriotism of the troops, and enjoined them to obey orders, not to waste ammunition, to fire slowly, selecting a mark, and to do much work with the bayonet."[1]

Under the stimulation of his historical studies, Captain Swift saw the need for a new course of practical instruction. He therefore prepared a system of simple tactical forms which he adapted from the experience of the German Army. There was a form for ordering a march to the front. There was a form for an attack order, a form for establishing an outpost, another for intrenching a position, another for an advance guard and another for pursuing a defeated enemy. In short, he prepared simple forms for simple field orders to meet every conceivable tactical situation.

With the introduction of these forms, tactical instruction assumed a new practical value. The student would be given a map and a military situation. He would assume himself to be the commander of a specified body of troops located at a given place. He would also be given certain information about the position and strength of the enemy—such incomplete information as he might have in actual war and no more. He would then be required to appraise the situation confronting him and to decide what ought to be done in the circumstances. Then, as the final test, he would be required to write an order that would convert that decision into action —with specific, clear instructions for each element of his command.

The value of such forms is obvious. A form for an attack is quite as convenient to a soldier as is a form for a lease to a lawyer. It saves time. It prevents the forgetting of any small but important detail. It enables subordinates to relieve their principals of a mass of routine work. The lawyer might not

[1]The most remarkable thing about this order is that, after much confusion and delay, Johnston was able to carry it into effect. But this was due, not to the merits of the order, but to the fact that the Union Army was not covered by an outpost.

trust his clerk to write an important lease *de novo*, but with a few special instructions, he can trust him to fill out an accepted form. And when it is filled out he can verify and approve it quickly. So, a general can use a junior aide-de-camp who is familiar with tactical forms. He can say, "Lieutenant Jones, we will march on Brownsville at six o'clock to-morrow morning. As the chief of staff has been detained, suppose you write the march order for the division." While the lieutenant writes the order according to the form, the general dictates an official letter, or gossips with the chief surgeon, or writes to his wife or takes a nap. When the lieutenant finishes the order, the general approves it or revises it quickly because he has the same form in his head. Merely following the form disposes of a mass of detail and leaves nothing forgotten. In every business, the use of the same forms teaches principals and subordinates to think and speak in the same language. The modern art of troop-leading would be impossible without them.

10

But there was something in Captain Swift's course in orders of even greater importance. Before writing the order, the student was required to study the map, to make an estimate of the military situation, and to make a tactical decision, precisely as he would do these things in a similar situation in actual war. Here, in short, was something more than academic education. It was a practical test of tactical decision and judgment. It was actual practice in the profession of arms in time of peace. Here the student was using the method that Frederick the Great devised for his own training in military art. To quote Carlyle again:

> For Friedrich is always looking out, were it even from the window of his carriage, and putting military problems to himself in all manner of scenery. What would a man do, in that kind of ground, if attacking, if attacked? With that hill, that brook, that bit of bog?

For the same method that Frederick employed in the open country, he also employed on the map. Captain Swift prob-

ably did not realize that he was introducing the method of training that prepared Frederick the Great for Levthen and Rossbach. He did not realize that he was preparing to teach his student officers as Frederick had taught Baron Steuben at the close of the Seven Years' War. Much less did he realize that he was restoring to the American Army what Steuben had brought to Washington. In a very real sense it was Eben Swift, as well as Elihu Root, who gave us our modern general staff. When he introduced his course in tactical orders, he really introduced what the Germans call the applicatory method.[1]

The course at Fort Leavenworth was interrupted by the Spanish-American War. It was restored to new activity after the war by Secretary Root.[2] In 1907, the applicatory method was introduced in the War College. It was soon recognized as the first step in a sound system of general staff education. In the meantime the new method was greatly developed at Fort Leavenworth. Between 1907 and 1912, under a great tactical instructor, Major John F. Morrison,[3] it reached the highest perfection. Under him, American officers were being trained for the World War as effectively as Foch was training his officers in France.

II

We have seen that in the hands of Frederick the Great this method of "concrete cases" was more than a system of instruction. He used it also as a "tactical measuring rod." It enabled him not only to teach Baron Steuben, but to measure

[1]In the French Army it is called the "method of concrete cases." It gives real practice in applying theoretical knowledge to actual "business" situations. It is the same, in principle, as the modern "case system" of teaching and studying law. But it is of special importance in the profession of arms. The members of that profession are denied the benefits of actual professional practice except at long intervals.

[2]The rapid development of the Fort Leavenworth schools after the Spanish-American War was largely due to the interest and energy of the Commandant, General J. Franklin Bell. General Bell was quick to recognize the great practical value of the applicatory method. With General W. W. Wotherspoon he was instrumental in having it introduced into the War College.

[3]Now, Major General John F. Morrison, U. S. Army, retired.

his practical capacity. It eventually served the same purpose at Fort Leavenworth. At the end of the Staff College course, the members of the class were not only instructed but calibrated. Those who were general staff officers in fact were recognized as such by their instructors and by their fellow students. This was to prove of great value in the World War. When General Pershing selected Hugh A. Drum as Chief of Staff of the First Army, he made the selection with confidence. Drum had been calibrated as fully equipped for this duty when he graduated from the Staff College. When Drum picked George Marshall as his Chief of Operations, he also was sure of his ground. That Marshall could be entrusted with the detailed troop-leading of a million men had been accurately determined by the "tactical measuring rod." These officers represented a new type in the American Army —a type that did not exist at the time of the Civil War.

But the applicatory method extended its influence far beyond the Service Schools. As we have seen, it is a method of self-education as well as a method of instruction. Under Major Morrison, the tactical problems prepared at Fort Leavenworth were placed on a "mailing list" and made available to all officers who applied for them. They were recognized at once as a new means of developing tactical judgment. Younger officers studied them as a preparation for future attendance at the schools. Older officers, past the school age, sent for them and studied them as a means of self-culture. Brigadier General John J. Pershing was one of the first senior officers to recognize their importance. For years he followed the course through the mailing list and solved the Leavenworth problems. Also, he was one of the first of our general officers who made the applicatory method the basis of practical instruction for the troops under his command. It also extended its influence beyond the Regular Army and into the National Guard.

But there was one source of dissatisfaction in the early days at Fort Leavenworth. There were no suitable maps of American terrains. For this reason, German topographical maps were used for the map problems, much to the disgust of practical American officers. It seemed ridiculous that hundreds of Americans should be minutely studying the military

topography of the frontier between Germany and France. Among these discontented officers was Captain Fox Conner, who completed the Staff College course in 1903. It was quite apparent to Captain Conner that American officers should use maps of our two seaboards and of the Canadian and Mexican frontiers. He was quite convinced that he could never have the slightest practical use for the bends of the Moselle, the slopes of Gravelotte, and the heights about Metz. And yet all the time, the higher powers were seeing to it that Captain Conner's topographical information should not be wasted. A few years later, as Chief of Operations of the A.E.F., he was actually planning for a great American offensive in the Metz country. If the war had lasted until 1919, General Conner's Leavenworth map would have served to portray his principal battlefield.[1] Was it only an accident that a generation of American officers should have known that Moselle country more intimately than any American terrain?

By 1914, there were many "general staff officers in fact" throughout the American service, but only a few of them bore the General Staff label. It was not until after the World War that calibrated general staff training was required by law as a prerequisite to appointment in the General Staff Corps.

[1]Shortly after his arrival in France, General Pershing sent the present writer, with Colonel Conner and Colonel Drum, to make a strategic reconnoissance of the proposed American theater of operations. While on this journey, from an artillery observatory north of Nancy, we could see Metz and the intervening country. With the artillery telescopes, we examined the very terrain that we had fought over so often at Fort Leavenworth. Later, a portion of battlefield of St. Mihiel was in this same terrain.

PART V

WOODROW WILSON'S WAR

CHAPTER XXVI

PREPAREDNESS

I

In considering our state of readiness for the World War, it will be interesting to examine what our military organization would have been in 1914, if our fathers had established a "well-regulated" militia. What would have been the military resources available to Woodrow Wilson, if Washington's legacy had been transmitted to him?

By 1914, Steuben's National Guard would have attained a peace strength of 600,000, mobilizable within a few days at its war strength of 1,200,000 men.[1] Throughout the country there would have been 1,400,000 able-bodied youngsters who had graduated from the force within the past ten years. Our citizen army would have been organized in tactical divisions accustomed to the team play of the several arms of the service. Each company and higher unit would have had a commander accustomed to handle it in the field. Each officer and man would have been accustomed in time of peace to camp and march with his war unit.

And there would be a competent general staff—though it might not bear the general staff label. There would be many trained general staff officers in fact, all fully calibrated by Steuben's tactical measuring rod. With general staff officers so trained, there would be plans of concentration, strategic deployment, transportation and supply based upon the requirements of an organized force actually in being. The War Department would be prepared to administer the war organization, because the war organization and the familiar peace

[1]Under the Knox Plan of 1790, or the Boudinot Plan of 1790, or the plans so repeatedly urged by Jefferson and Madison (all of which were special forms of Washington's "well-regulated" militia), the numbers available would have been much greater than under the Steuben Plan.

organization would be the same. The American Army of the People would be ready for defensive action immediately. Within twenty-four hours it could enter upon a simple programme of advanced training—a programme adapted by an enlightened general staff from the methods employed by Steuben at Valley Forge.

And there would be a small tight, *non-expansible* regular army. Though Washington's Indian frontier constabulary would no longer be needed, there would still be special duties that only professional soldiers could perform. There would be regular garrisons for the Philippines and Hawaii and the Canal Zone and there would be a small expeditionary force as a reserve for these foreign garrisons and for sudden minor emergencies. This expeditionary force would comprise two, or possibly three, full-strength divisions, ready for instant service any place in the world. There would thus be a small but efficient regular army—a regular army in fact, a real model and experimental laboratory for the citizen army. And there would be no plan to *dilute* it with raw recruits on the outbreak of war.

And there would be other professional officers with the citizen army—but no more than strictly necessary. These selected professionals would be the special descendants of Baron Steuben. Among them would be officers for the peacetime overhead of the War Department, teachers at the military academies, and a limited number of instructors for the training service of the citizen army. These would be the indispensable professional overhead of the Army of the People.

It would be the primary mission of these professional officers to diffuse military knowledge and to discover and develop latent gifts of leadership among the people. Some of these professionals, if duly tested and calibrated for leadership, would themselves be eligible for command. But there would be no pretension that command is a monopoly for the professional soldier and no delusion that all professional soldiers are fit for it. The way to command would be open to professional leaders like Lee and Hancock and Pershing, but their chief professional mission in time of peace would be to seek out and develop native leaders like Washington and

Greene and Andrew Jackson and Forrest and Logan. For in a correct military organization the gift of leadership can be tested and appraised in time of peace. No man, without this verified gift, should be entrusted with military command merely because he is a professional soldier. And no man possessing it should be denied its exercise merely because he is not a professional. Leaders, like poets, are born and not made. It is therefore the problem of democracy not to make them, but to find and develop them.[1] A military academy can convert a whole class into highly useful drill masters, military teachers and administrators, but it can graduate no leader who was not already a leader when he first entered the class.

For many years it has been the fashion to blame Congress for our unpreparedness. According to this view, the War Department has proposed wise military measures which our statesmen have been too unintelligent to adopt. But the story of Washington's military legacy suggests a revision of this legend. For more than a century our professional military experts urged the development of an expansible standing army and strove to discredit our traditional system of national defence. After the Civil War, this attitude found pseudo-scientific support in General Upton's incomplete and uncritical historical researches. Does not this suggest the real reason for our past unpreparedness and for our present burden of national debt? For more than a century our military authorities opposed the only feasible American solution and urged a military system inconsistent with the genius of democratic institutions. If Congress, in the National Defence Act of 1920, made an appreciable return to the wisdom of the fathers, it was after rejecting the advice of the War Department.

There could have been no problem of preparedness for Woodrow Wilson if our fathers had established Washington's "well-regulated" militia. Our shores would have been impregnable against invasion. Further preparedness would have required nothing more than a summons to further training.

[1]For the views of Marshal Foch on this interesting question see footnote on page 338.

Further expansion would have been the simple process of duplicating a familiar pattern in each battalion area. We should have been prepared to do in our first year of war what, in the actual event, we could not do until the second. But could there have been a war of autocratic reaction under these conditions? If America had done her part toward *keeping* the world safe for democracy could it have been necessary to fight a war to *make* it so? Washington sought to place the might of America in negotiable form. Had he succeeded in this, could America have been ignored as a "negligible" in the calculations of the German General Staff?

2

In December, 1914, in his first message to Congress after the outbreak of the World War, President Wilson outlined our traditional military policy. While he was stressing the importance of neutrality, he also outlined a rational plan of preparedness, adequate for our defence and consistent with our national principles. In the course of this message he said:

> We must depend in every time of national peril, in the future as in the past, not upon a standing army, nor yet upon a reserve army, but upon a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms. It will be right enough, right American policy based upon our accustomed principles and practices, to provide a system by which every citizen who will volunteer for the training may be made familiar with the use of modern arms, the rudiments of drill and maneuver, and the maintenance and sanitation of camps. We should encourage such training and make it a means of discipline which our young men will learn to value. . . . Every means by which such things can be stimulated is legitimate, and such a method smacks of true American ideas. It is right too that the National Guard of the States should be developed and strengthened by every means which is not inconsistent with our obligations to our own people or with the established policy of our Government. And this, also, not because the time or occasion specially calls for such measures, but because it should be our constant policy to make these provisions for our national peace and safety.

As we read these words again in the light of our military history, we are amazed at their practical wisdom. We find President Wilson acting as President Washington did in a similar world crisis. Each was confronted by a great war in Europe. Each urged strict neutrality and each urged effective national defence—not by a standing army but by "a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms." Here Wilson charted the true median way between Militarism and Pacifism as Washington had done before him.

3

What an opportunity this was for the General Staff. Here was an invitation from its commander-in-chief to give him a plan of preparedness. But unfortunately the War Department failed Woodrow Wilson as it had failed Abraham Lincoln. Again its panacea was regular army expansion. The General Staff as a body was ignorant of that "right American policy based upon our accustomed principles and practices" to which the President referred. Nor was its ignorance the ordinary, corrigible form of ignorance due to incomplete historical knowledge. It was a more indurated and refractory form of ignorance based upon highly systematized and carefully exploited false knowledge. Its officers had been educated in another and different tradition. To them, Emory Upton and not George Washington was the prophet of military orthodoxy. To them, therefore, the President's "citizenry trained and accustomed to arms" was a dangerous heresy. As the High Priests of military orthodoxy, they deemed it their duty to exorcise heresy even in so exalted a heretic as the President of the United States. And so they calmly ignored their constitutional commander-in-chief. They followed their prophet, Upton, to the *reductio ad absurdum*. At the outbreak of a World War against Prussian Militarism, they proposed a form of Prussian Militarism for the United States.

But why did not the President take command of his General Staff and require their subordination? How could he permit them to ignore and defy his clearly announced policy?

Why did he not push through his preparedness programme as he had pushed through his banking reforms? This was not his attitude when his Federal Reserve System was opposed. Then, he asserted effective leadership. He brought adverse interests together in conference and reconciled conflicting views. By wise guidance he overcame opposition and forced his banking reforms through Congress. His preparedness programme was just as sound as his financial programme. Why did he guide the one to brilliant achievement in constructive legislation and not the other?

The answer is to be found in the limitations of Woodrow Wilson the historian. Wilson the historian failed to equip Wilson the War President as he had equipped Wilson the Peace President. Wilson the historian had mastered the evolution of our financial institutions, but he had given little study to our military institutions. As the historian of Jackson's administration, he tells the story of the Bank of the United States with all of its political and economic implications. Here the historian prepared the way for the practical statesman.

But Wilson the historian failed to discover Washington's practical solution of the military problem of the modern democratic state. Nor did Wilson, the biographer of Washington, discover the legacy of military wisdom which his hero had prepared for the guidance of his remotest successors. President Wilson's historical instinct led him to a true general conception of Washington's military policy, but Wilson the historian had failed to bring him Washington's detailed working project. In espousing "a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms" President Wilson followed the wisdom of the fathers. But he did not have their scientific plans for embodying that wisdom in effective institutions.

4

It would be interesting to consider what President Wilson might have accomplished had he studied the military half as well as the financial half of Washington's political system. In that event his message of December 8, 1914,

must have been the prelude to constructive action. We can imagine him addressing his General Staff in some such terms as these:

"Gentlemen: There are two divergent views on national defence. One we may call the Washingtonian view, the other the Uptonian view. Washington sought to train young men for service in an organized citizen army. Upton sought to draw them into the ranks of an expansible standing army. An effective military system can be erected upon either of these conceptions. But the choice between them is not a military question. It is a political question to be decided by the statesman and not by the professional soldier.

"In my message to Congress, yesterday, I announced my choice as between these two systems. It is my decision that the Washingtonian system is consistent with our national tradition and with the present world situation and that the Uptonian system is inconsistent with both. In your detailed plans for the national defence, you will therefore accept this as the official decision of your constitutional commander-in-chief. You will bear in mind that the question of the relative merits of these two systems has been settled for you by competent superior authority. In your constructive labors you will therefore build on the Washingtonian model. The Uptonian model is no longer before you. I assume full responsibility for this decision.

"In the meantime in order to facilitate your labors and to broaden your point of view, I have arranged for a number of distinguished gentlemen to collaborate with you. Among them are several well-known officers of the National Guard and several distinguished educators who are interested in military training camps for our patriotic young men. Among them also are several trained historians who will assist you in your historical researches. I shall be glad to confer with you from time to time when my decision on your successive tentative conclusions is necessary or when there are differences of opinion between you and your lay associates. And I would ask you not to attempt to compromise these inevitable differences of opinion. By submitting such issues to me for

decision, you will enable me to lay the foundations of settled policy.

"One special field of inquiry occurs to me. One of your committees, including both Regular and National Guard officers, should investigate Washington's writings in the Library of Congress. There you will find the record, heretofore unpublished, of an elaborate military policy prepared by Washington himself. I have examined it in my own historical reading, but only as a layman. Its full merits will be more fully appreciated by military specialists like you. You will also find a later plan prepared by Baron von Steuben with Washington's approval. This will especially engage your interest. For the Baron proposed the complete development of a citizen army of the same type as our present National Guard. That this native-born institution should spring up spontaneously after more than a century of discouragement and neglect is a remarkable tribute to Steuben's constructive genius and to Washington's prophetic vision.

"Yes, General Gadget, I am aware that some question has been raised as to the power of the Federal Government, under the Constitution, to make an effective army out of the militia. But this is a constitutional question which I will refer to my legal advisers and not to the General Staff. In the meantime I have no misgivings. It is inconceivable to me that Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison should have repeatedly urged an unconstitutional programme. Washington, Hamilton, and Madison were members of the Constitutional Convention when the militia clauses were drawn. Hamilton strongly advocated a force like the National Guard in the *Federalist*. Indeed it is highly significant that this is one of the few constitutional questions in which Hamilton and Jefferson were in full accord.

"When your historical study is completed, I will arrange to have it printed for the information of the country. Our fellow citizens will be especially interested in the military system that President Washington urged upon Congress at a time when he was also enforcing neutrality at the beginning of the Wars of the French Revolution. This is of special interest just at this time. If our fathers had adopted Wash-

ington's plan, they could not have been forced into the Napoleonic World War in 1812.

"In fixing the dimensions of the regular army, you will again find scientific guidance in Washington's wisdom. He relied upon citizen soldiers for defence, but he found that some professional soldiers were indispensable. He therefore proposed enough professional soldiers to do those things that manifestly cannot be done by citizen soldiers in time of peace. He proposed *enough* professional soldiers for these special services but *no more*. This suggests a strict scientific principle for fixing the strength of the regular establishment. When we maintain one single professional soldier to do something that can be done effectively by a citizen soldier, we have just one man too many in the regular army. Whenever you violate this principle you not only increase our military expenditure unduly, but impair our ultimate capacity for defence.

"In my message to Congress, I suggested the propriety of providing military training for all young men who may volunteer to receive it. You will therefore consider means of providing enlarged facilities in special camps or in the schools. Many, perhaps most, of these young men will find their proper place in your reorganized National Guard. And in this connection, I desire that one of your mixed committees, comprising both professional and citizen soldiers, should study the Swiss training system——

"Yes, General Gadget, I recall our recent conversation in which you told me that the Swiss military system is totally inapplicable to American conditions. But I find that some quite respectable authorities, including Washington, Von Steuben, and Knox, venture to differ with you. Of course there are great and manifest differences between the two countries. But that need not deny us the benefits of a comparative study of their respective institutions. That did not deter the Swiss from adopting many features of our federal system in their new federal constitution. The point is that the Swiss military system, though different somewhat in detail, is precisely the same in type as that which Washington proposed for us. You will therefore find it profitable to ex-

amine it as a practical laboratory in which Washington's military policy has been under careful and continuous experimental test for more than a century. Indeed you will find that when Baron von Steuben invented our modern National Guard, it was consciously designed by him as a voluntary modification of the Swiss system. If I were calling upon you to construct an Uptonian military system, I would not expect you to find anything to encourage you in Switzerland. But you will find yourself quite at home there as you labor to perfect our traditional or Washingtonian system."

5

Under such instructions from the President, there must have been speedy progress. Estopped from the further pursuit of false gods, our general staff officers could not have escaped their great constructive opportunity. Enlightened by a more critical knowledge of our military history, they must have found a new vision of the military might of a "citizenry trained and accustomed to arms." Broadened by their joint labors with able lawyers and National Guardsmen like John F. O'Ryan and James A. Drain, they must have found that a constitutional riddle presents few difficulties when a solution is earnestly sought "between friends." Aided by advocates of popular military training such as Dr. H. S. Drinker and Grenville Clark, they must have acquired a new respect for the patriotism and intelligence of their non-professional brethren. In such a broadened environment, they must have lost some of the narrowness engendered by a century of cloistered introspection. Such a meeting of minds, under such instructions from the President, must soon have borne fruit in a constructive plan.

And such a plan could have been submitted to the President within a few weeks. It would not have been necessary to construct it *de novo*. For strange to say, a recent general Staff committee had already reconstructed the Washingtonian system. If the President had forbidden further Uptonian dissipation, the War Department must have returned to this sound American plan.

6

In 1911, when Henry L. Stimson was Secretary of War, he had detailed a committee[1] of General Staff officers to study our national military policy and organization. With his Chief of Staff, General Leonard Wood, Secretary Stimson had collaborated freely with the members of this committee. He had conferred with them frequently and had personally guided their labors. Neither Secretary Stimson nor any of his subordinates had any knowledge of Washington's unpublished plans. But they had caught the spirit of his teaching as revealed by his published writings and finally proposed an organization of precisely the same type as his. The report[2] of this Committee, published by order of the Secretary of War in 1912, contains the following statement of general principles:

> It is the traditional policy of the United States that the military establishment in time of peace is to be a small regular army, and that the ultimate war force of the nation is to be a great army of citizen soldiers. This fundamental theory of military organization is sound economically and politically. . . .
>
> It is therefore our most important military problem to devise means for preparing great armies of citizen soldiers to meet the emergency of modern war. The organization of the regular army is but a smaller phase of this problem. It is simply the peace nucelus of the greater war army and its strength and organization should always be considered with reference to its relation to the greater war force which cannot be placed in the field till war is imminent. . . .

In the foregoing extract from the Stimson Report, we find a modern restatement of Washington's original policy. It is also the policy that President Wilson outlined in his message of December 8, 1914. But in its practical conclusions the

[1]The members of this committee were Lieut. Colonel Richmond P. Davis, Major William Lassiter, Captain John McA. Palmer, and Captain G. V. H. Moseley.

[2]*Report on the Organization of the Land Forces of the United States*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1912.

Stimson Committee went even further. It anticipated our ultimate organization for the World War as well as our permanent post-war organization under the National Defense Act of 1920. These conclusions are briefly stated in the Stimson Report as follows:

> The complete organization of the mobile land forces of the United States will, therefore, include three distinct forces:
>
> 1. A regular army organized in divisions and cavalry brigades and ready for immediate use as an expeditionary force or for other purposes for which the citizen soldiery is not available, or for employment in the first stages of war while the citizen soldiery is mobilizing and concentrating.
>
> 2. An army of national citizen soldiers organized in peace in complete divisions and prepared to reënforce the regular army in time of war. [*This corresponds to our present National Guard.*]
>
> 3. An army of volunteers to be organized under prearranged plans when greater forces are required than can be furnished by the regular army and the organized citizen soldiery. [*This is the germ of the National Army as organized for the World War and of our present Organized Reserves.*]
>
> The peace establishment of the regular army with the organized division districts of the National Guard should include the machinery for the recruiting, organization, and mobilization of this great third line of the national defense.

In the foregoing statement, we find proposals for a uniform territorial organization of National Guard divisions such as were ultimately formed in the spring of 1917 and such as we have to-day. We also find the framework of a second line of the Citizen Army like the National Army of the World War and like our present Organized Reserves. The report also included Secretary Stimson's own solution of the constitutional questions involved in using the National Guard as a part of the army of the United States in time of war. In short, when President Wilson delivered his first preparedness message to Congress, the very plan that he sought lay all but completed in a War Department pigeon-hole.

If the Stimson plan of 1912 had been submitted to a competent joint committee of citizen soldiers and professionals,

the problem of preparedness must have been simple. The National Guard, the National Army, and the Training Camps might have begun a programme of harmonious team work in the summer of 1915. Here was a plan that could receive the full support of the administration and of the public. It was not a product of war hysteria. It was a proposal, formulated in a time of profound peace, to develop our traditional national policy. It was "right American policy based upon our accustomed principles and practices." In the language of the President's message, it was permissible even in the existing world crisis:

> . . . not because the time or occasion specially calls for such measures, but because it should be our constant policy to make these provisions for our national peace and safety.

7

But the Stimson plan remained in its pigeon-hole. The General Staff was not seeking that kind of national defence. It was bent on Upton's expansible standing army. It was not seeking Washington's "citizenry trained and accustomed to arms." From its point of view, President Wilson's proposal and Secretary Stimson's practical project were equally dangerous heresies. And both were religiously ignored.

The General Staff plan of 1915[1] is based upon two remarkable premises as follows:

> First Premise: *Soldiers must have twelve months' intensive training before they are fit for war.*
>
> Second Premise: *Under constitutional limitations, the organized militia cannot be used for general military purposes and cannot be made an effective military force.*

From these premises, the General Staff's conclusions were logical—the National Guard should be abandoned as a part of our war army and our sole reliance should be an expansible

[1] *Statement of a Proper Military Policy for the United States, prepared by the War College Division, General Staff Corps, in compliance with Instructions of the Secretary of War, March, 1915.* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1916.

standing army with a citizen reserve system under regular army supervision and strict federal control.

It must be admitted that the General Staff plan of 1915 is a highly logical structure. Its conclusions follow inevitably from its premises. But, unfortunately, both of its premises were absolutely false. The first premise, that twelve months' intensive training is necessary, was then fully refuted by our past military history, and was soon to be refuted again by our experience in the World War. As to the constitutional premise, no argument is necessary. Here the General Staff made itself a court of last resort upon a purely constitutional question. It adhered to Emory Upton as a constitutional authority—not only against such national fathers as Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison, but also against the more recent solution of so eminent a constitutional lawyer as Henry L. Stimson, late Secretary of War.

8

Nearly two years were wasted before this constitutional bubble was punctured. The new Secretary of War, Mr. Garrison, finally espoused the constitutional doctrine of his General Staff. Under the tutelage of his Uptonian advisers, he concluded that the government lacked the power to perfect Washington's "well-regulated" militia. He therefore approved the General Staff's proposal to replace it by the, so-called, Continental Army,[1] a strictly federal force.

And for a time President Wilson accepted Secretary Garrison's point of view. In the fall and winter of 1915–16, he gave his sanction to the Continental Army on the ground that he had come to doubt the adequacy of the government's powers to develop and use the militia. In the meantime, the forces of preparedness were hopelessly divided. The disciples of Upton, believing themselves also the disciples of Washington, encountered the political opposition of Washington's

[1]Historically, this name was a complete misnomer. If the authors of the Continental Army plan had studied Washington's military policy, they must have found that the National Guard, which they proposed to destroy, is the real descendant and modern prototype of Washington's Continental Army.

National Guard. In February, 1916, the chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, Mr. James Hay, informed the President that his committee, supported by the sentiment of the House, had determined to reject the Continental Army Plan and to provide for developing the National Guard as the foundation of our national defence. The President still urged his constitutional doubts. But when the Attorney General endorsed Mr. Hay's proposal, the President approved it and urged its immediate enactment. Secretary Garrison thereupon tendered his resignation as Secretary of War.

It is unnecessary to go into the merits of this controversy. It has been finally settled by inexorable facts. In the following year, the National Guard found a way to cross the ocean and fight in France without violating the Constitution. Since the World War, the federal government has been doing with the National Guard, constitutionally and legally (though somewhat reluctantly), all of the things which Secretary Garrison insisted that it could not do.[1]

9

Thus it was not until the spring of 1916 that Congress was able to answer the first question of preparedness—"Shall we follow Washington or shall we follow Upton?" Congress, with the President's approval, decided on the Washingtonian citizen army but it was then too late to erect a logical Washingtonian system. Mr. Hay was unable to accomplish this alone and he could expect little help from an Uptonian General Staff. This accounts for the defects of the National Defense Act of 1916. It was a hodge-podge of two mutually

[1]The author had recently returned to duty on the General Staff at the time of Secretary Garrison's resignation. At that time he was inclined to believe that on the question of adequate constitutional powers, the Secretary of War was right and the President wrong. The author was not yet entirely free from the influence of the Calhoun-Scott-Uptonian doctrine in which he had been educated. He still believed that, under the military clauses of the Constitution, *the nation is fully empowered to use all of its manpower, excepting only that portion which has been organized and trained in time of peace.* It is most humiliating to the author to confess that he could ever have believed such nonsense.

antagonistic systems. Upton's expansible standing army was hastily wedded to Washington's National Guard. Here were two most incompatible spouses. The law provided for popular military training in the colleges and in training camps. But these training systems were originally designed for the General Staff's Uptonian system. There was no time to readjust them to the Washingtonian plan. The law increased the regular army and fixed the status of the National Guard. But on the whole it gave little real preparedness for our entry into the World War. Under this law alone we should have had an army of about 700,000 men by the fall of 1920—just two years after the Armistice.

But the real work of preparedness did not wait upon legislation. The soul of a great people was gradually awakening. The national intellect was weighing the inexorable facts of war. The most vital of these popular manifestations was to be found in the training camps originally fostered by General Wood. Here our ablest young men assembled and stood in the ranks themselves even as Demosthenes had urged the Athenian youth to do. It was largely these so-called Plattsburg Training Camps and the "Plattsburg Idea" that prepared the American people to assert its might in war. These young men learned something of military drill and discipline. Here the camps did good. They also began their preparation for future leadership. This too was good. Here a system of training was evolved through which thousands of officers would later be prepared for war. This was one of the most important of our preparations for the World War. But even this was not the greatest contribution of the Plattsburg movement. The real "Plattsburg Idea" was a gospel of national service in which each man and each woman must be prepared to do his part. One month of Plattsburg could not make even the ablest man a trained soldier, but it made him a missionary of national defence. When he returned to his home he preached the gospel and he inspired his whole neighborhood. He preached that if war should come, not the *few* but the *all* should bear its burdens—that every man and every woman and every dollar should be mobilized if America should go to war.

10

The National Defense Act of 1916 provided for increasing the regular army and for increasing and employing the National Guard. But it did not provide the machinery or the organization for a great national mobilization. In December, 1916, the War College Division of the General Staff was instructed to prepare a plan of universal military training. This plan was never carried into effect, as such. But fortunately it was completed just when war was declared, and then, with little modification, it became an effective plan for forming a national war army.

The original task had been assigned to a committee of General Staff officers[1] with which the present writer had the honor to serve. This committee worked out all the details of a plan under which every able-bodied young man would enter a military training class in his nineteenth year. These classes after such training would form a territorial national army. The committee worked out the details for enrolling these young men, for bringing them into the service, for training them, and for dividing the country into sixteen training areas. By the time this plan was done war had become imminent and military training in time of peace was a dead issue. But the plan for this training system with its sixteen training areas was ready just in time to form the sixteen divisions of the National Army. Here, with little modification, was a nation-wide war structure all ready for the selective draft to fill. With this plan, the War Department was ready to proceed when the President decided that the citizen war army should comprise sixteen National Guard and sixteen National Army divisions. This he did under the full discretionary powers that Congress granted him after the declaration of war. Thus, after much valuable time had been wasted in futile Uptonian propaganda, the War Department returned to the Washingtonian plan which the Stimson

[1]The members of this committee were Major P. D. Lochridge, Major Andrew Moses, Major John McA. Palmer, and Captain Tenney Ross. Later, the committee had the able assistance of the student officers at the War College.

Committee had outlined in 1912. What a pity that it remained in its pigeon-hole when the President urged the Washingtonian organization in December, 1914!

II

While this War College plan of 1916–1917 laid the foundation for the war army and for the selective draft, it lacked one vital feature of President Wilson's final war organization. We worked out all the details of military population, of registration, of induction into the service, of territorial organization and of training, but we totally missed the stroke of genius that made selective service a great popular success. As military men, we devised a draft machinery to be operated by military men. It did not occur to us that patriotic civilian organizations in every community could man our machinery infinitely better than we could man it ourselves. It was by entrusting this draft machinery to the people themselves that Secretary Baker assured its mighty success. Here again Abraham Lincoln's faith was vindicated: "The people will save their government, if the government itself will do its part only indifferently well."

In the War College plans as first approved, it was settled that the regular army should not be further expanded. The National Defense Act of 1916 had authorized a great increase in the number of regular regiments. This increase was to be extended over a period of five years, but the President was given the discretion to order the full expansion immediately in the event of war. One fifth of the increase had been made immediately after the passage of the Act and the question now arose as to whether the President should exercise his war-time discretion and order the full expansion at once.

After considering the disastrous effect of the increase of the regular army at the outbreak of the Civil War, the War College Division opposed further increase in 1917. With a great citizen army to be organized and trained and prepared for war, we urged that the regular army should be prepared to release the maximum number of trained officers for service with the citizen army and with the command and staff over-

head that must be enormously expanded. Under this policy the existing regiments of the regular army would be reorganized and equipped for immediate service in war, but no new regular regiments would be organized. The regular army would thus be able to send the maximum possible number of trained officers to lead and train and supply the great war army of citizen soldiers. It would thus follow the wisdom of Grant and Stonewall Jackson. It would thus avoid the folly of Winfield Scott and McDowell.

But this wise provision was overruled in the War Department. Regular army expansion would mean rapid promotion in the permanent establishment. Most officers wanted their promotion but only a few had studied the other side of the question. And so, probably without full knowledge of all of the facts, Secretary Baker overruled a vital feature of his war organization. As in 1861, the regular army was greatly expanded[1] on the outbreak of war. As in 1861, this seriously impaired our effective war power. New regular regiments (regular regiments only in name) absorbed trained officers who should have found more important duties with the citizen war army and in the greatly expanded war overhead. That is where Washington and Steuben and Grant and Lee and Stonewall Jackson would have used them. And this policy reacted unfavorably on the regular army itself. All of its infantry and field artillery regiments, old as well as new, were highly diluted with inexperienced officers and raw recruits. If sound organization had not been sacrificed to regular army expansion, we might have had two or three regular army divisions ready for field service soon after their arrival in France. The First Division might then have taken over a sector at the front before the 19th of January, 1918.[2]

[1]The number of regular infantry regiments was increased from thirty-one to thirty-eight in July, 1916, and from thirty-eight to sixty-four in May, 1917. The number of regular field artillery regiments was increased from six to nine in July, 1916, and from nine to twenty-one in May, 1917. The regular cavalry and coast artillery were also increased in July, 1916, and again in May, 1917, though it was quite obvious that there could be little or no use for these arms, as such, in the pending war.

[2]Only seven regular army divisions, comprising twenty-eight infantry regiments, had active service in France. It would therefore seem that

12

Soon after the declaration of war, two important foreign missions came to Washington. With the French mission came Marshal Joffre with a number of able French officers. With the British mission, headed by Mr. Balfour, came General Bridges with a British military staff. Members of both of these missions came down to the War College where they aided us greatly in our hurried preparations for war.

Marshal Joffre was insistent that American troops should go to France without delay. He appreciated that much time must elapse before we could have an effective army in Europe. But he was anxious that at least one American division should go to France at once as a visible token of our entry into the war. He believed that this would produce a great moral effect in the French Army and among the French people. Accordingly the War College Division was instructed to prepare a plan for the formation of one "provisional" division and for its immediate dispatch to France. It is characteristic of our situation at that time that we did not have a single formed division in the American regular army. We therefore had to extemporize one.

This task was referred to a committee of three officers, Major Briant H. Wells, Captain Dan T. Moore, and the present writer. In our first consultation with our British and French comrades we learned that in order to send a single effective division to France it would be necessary to abandon our whole military organization. The recent National Defense Act prescribed a detailed organization of the Infantry Division which had been carefully prepared about two years before by the General Staff. We now learned, less than a year after the passage of that law, that it would be impossible for the General Staff's division to operate in France. It would not fit into the trench system on the Western front and it would not fit into the European system of railroad transportation. Indeed we were mortified to learn that we had carefully elaborated a tactical organization that was totally

increasing the number of infantry regiments from thirty-eight to sixty-four in May, 1917, had little justification as a war measure.

unsuited to modern war. Since 1914 the General Staff had been so busy with its propaganda for an Uptonian standing army that it had had little time to reflect on the possible contingency of American operations in France. But fortunately the National Defense Act contained one sound tactical provision. It authorized the President to change the prescribed organization if the efficiency of the service should require it. As war had been declared this provision enabled the committee to comply with its orders. We therefore abandoned the elaborate tactical organization prescribed by the National Defense Act before it was a full year old.

The new division comprised two infantry brigades, each of two regiments, with appropriate auxiliaries. With little modification, this division became the basis of the organization of our army in France and of our present post-war establishment. But we should hardly call it a new tactical organization as it is identical, in principle, with that which Steuben proposed and Washington approved in 1784.

While the committee was preparing its new tables of organization, it was still in conference with its foreign military advisers. One of them, Major Requin of the French Army, pointed out that in addition to sending a division with its commander, we should also send two other generals, each with an appropriate staff. One of these, to be designated as the future commander-in-chief, should go over at once, establish his headquarters, and solve the principal problems of his army, long in advance of its arrival in France. The other general, designated as the Commander of the Lines of Communication, should also precede the nascent army and prepare the machinery for its transportation and supply.

Though the committee's instructions had been limited to the formation of an expeditionary force of one division, it adopted Major Requin's suggestion and embodied it in its report. The hint was adopted by the War Department. The members of this committee may therefore flatter themselves that, in a modest way, they assisted at the birth of the A.E.F. When General Pershing was summoned from Texas it was expected that, at first, he would command the "provisional division" in person. But when he arrived in Washington his

status had changed. He was now to go solely as Commander-in-chief; free from the immediate command of the "provisional division" and, therefore, free to concentrate all of his energies upon his greater mission.[1]

[1]See page 330 for an account of how General Pershing was selected by Secretary Baker in person.

CHAPTER XXVII

WAR

I

When war was declared against Germany on April 6, 1917, we were totally unprepared to give any immediate military aid to our allies in Europe. At least a year must elapse before any considerable American Army could be formed even in America. And it was a serious question whether, even with such an army formed in America, it would be possible to transport it to Europe in time to influence the decision.

An impartial student of the American Civil War might have serious misgivings on this point. He would recall that it took three years to prepare the Union armies for effective offensive operations under Grant and Sherman. He would recall that President Lincoln's great war machine had to undergo a slow and progressive development. One year had been sufficient to develop the fighting power of the Union soldier. But one year had not been sufficient to develop an effective system of leadership. As early as 1862, the soldiers of Shiloh and of Antietam had demonstrated that they could endure the supreme test of heavy battle losses. But this was long before their leaders were fit to lead them. It was not until 1863 that Grant completed his education in the school of war and wrote his graduation thesis at Vicksburg. It was not until 1864 that Lincoln's mighty war team was ready for decisive offensive action.[1]

Our critic would also recall that at the end of the Civil War the Federal Army was the most powerful and most effec-

[1]The Army of Northern Virginia developed its war efficiency much more rapidly than any of the other armies either North or South. The underlying reason for this exception has been discussed in our chapters on the Civil War. It will be referred to again further on in this chapter in connection with its relation to our development for the World War.

tive military organization in the world. But he would also recall that the American people had done nothing to perpetuate its organization, its experience, or its traditions. None of this mighty investment of blood and treasure had been funded for the security of future generations. At the outbreak of the War with Spain, American readiness for war on a large scale was relatively little better than it had been in 1861.

Such, apparently, was the lesson recorded in American military history. On the face of the record, it was more encouraging to the German General Staff than it was to our allies. America might train competent soldiers by 1918. But she could not build up a great American army under competent American leadership before 1919 or 1920. And that would be too late. Before that time the war would end in German victory. It was upon this simple "estimate of the situation" that Ludendorf sought a decision in the spring of 1918.

2

But there were factors in the situation in 1917 that did not exist in 1861. Woodrow Wilson had mighty resources and effective organizations that were totally lacking to Abraham Lincoln. Few were far-sighted enough to see them then. Many do not appreciate them fully now. To recite them may therefore throw a new light upon the history of America's part in the World War.

In the first place, President Wilson was supported by a united nation. In a technical military sense, we were indeed unprepared for the World War. But in a larger and more important sense we were prepared, because the whole nation was imbued with the will to victory and was prepared to make all of the sacrifices that might be necessary to win it. We knew at the start that it might be a long war and that it might tax all of our resources. Here we find the first great contrast with the Civil War situation. It was one of Abraham Lincoln's greatest war problems to awaken popular support at the beginning and to keep it alive through long years of discouragement and defeat.

When Congress declared war in April, 1917, its action was

decisive and was fully endorsed by the American people as inevitable and necessary. Within the next few weeks, under strong pressure of a united public opinion, laws were passed making all of our manpower and all of our wealth available to the government for the prosecution of the war. All this was possible because the American people were united and were spiritually and morally prepared for war. After three years of gradual awakening they had come to appraise the formidable nature of the German war power. We all knew that the danger called for the organization of all our resources and we made all of our resources available to our constitutional commander-in-chief. Lincoln was forced to seize his war power as an extra-legal dictator. Wilson's dictatorship was immediately conferred upon him by law.

President Wilson was indeed confronted by a tremendous task and responsibility, but from the beginning he was free to plan on the largest scale and to expend the national energies and resources without stint. It was a great advantage that public opinion recognized the seriousness of the task and therefore spared the government any unreasoning pressure for immediate results.

The Wilson administration did not have to contend with that cry of "On to Richmond" which hurried the Lincoln administration into the disaster of Bull Run.

Abraham Lincoln faced the issues of a war that was all the more terrible because its outlines were vague and uncertain. But our main objectives in the World War were astonishingly clear. It soon became apparent that a great American Army strong enough to replace the collapsing power of Russia *must* be organized, equipped, and trained without delay. Nor were there any strategic doubts. The very battlefield was known. It was clear that this American army must go to France and that it must take a decisive part in the crushing defeat of the Germans on the Western Front. The difficulties in the way of this enterprise were great but they were clearly understood not only by the government but by the people. The normal difficulty of transporting a great army overseas was increased by the German submarine. This peril must be met by our navy, and our ship-building industry must help

to replace tonnage more rapidly than Germany could destroy it. All this must be done without impairing the capacity of our industries to supply our allies with food, munitions, and other materials of war. It is true that the government was given a gigantic task, but the broad issues were clear and it could count upon the unqualified support of the American people. The time element was indeed pressing, but for a while at least we could count upon the continued resistance of the great war armies of our allies.

And there was no immediate war menace to American soil or to American homes. In the World War, Hindenburg and Ludendorf threatened Paris. In the Civil War, Lee and Jackson repeatedly threatened Washington. In his August drive of 1862, Lee won a great victory thirty miles from the capital. In his raid of 1864, Early came within two miles of the President's summer quarters at the Soldiers' Home. In those days the "devastated areas" were not across the Atlantic three thousand miles away. Even when the March drive opened in 1918, America was secure.[1] The American people never suffered or understood the horror and privation of the World War as did every man and woman in stricken Europe. There was no war panic in America to disturb our deliberate preparations.

3

If President Wilson had greater resources and a more united popular support, he also had a government organized to utilize them. This President Lincoln did not have. Newton D. Baker was the head of a correctly organized modern War Department. There was no such agency in 1861. Thanks to the reforms initiated by Secretary Root, the whole military establishment was subordinate to Mr. Baker as its responsible civil head. The secretary controlled it through a chief of

[1]The author returned to America for a short time in the spring of 1918 after a year in Europe. When he landed in New York he found countless signs of war effort and enthusiasm, but he was impressed by the total absence of the tense war atmosphere that he had left behind him in Paris. The Rue de Rivoli was pitch dark at night. Broadway was ablaze with light.

staff with complete executive authority under himself and the President. There was no War Department in this sense under Cameron and Stanton. In 1861 military authority was divided along the vaguest lines between the Secretary of War and a commanding general who professed full subordination to the President alone. President Wilson could and did delegate his full authority as commander-in-chief of the army to his war minister. There was no such single agency of delegation in the American government when Lincoln became President. His commanding general and his Secretary of War were coördinate authorities. As one of them was not subordinate to the other, their only possible coördination was through him. This placed the burden directly on the President's shoulders and made his personal intervention necessary. Under such a system friction and misunderstanding between Stanton and McClellan were inevitable. There was no possible cause for such friction in 1917. When we commend President Wilson for not interfering with his military leaders, we must bear in mind that he had no occasion for such interference. It was not forced upon him as it was forced upon Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln is indeed to be condemned for his interference—not because he interfered, but because he did not interfere sooner. If Woodrow Wilson had had a Secretary of War with only the powers enjoyed by Simon Cameron, adequate preparation for the World War would have been difficult, if not impossible. If Abraham Lincoln had had a war minister with the powers enjoyed by Newton D. Baker he should have crushed the Confederacy before 1863. He had ample resources for this. But he did not have an organization competent to exploit and direct them, until he jury-rigged it himself—but too late for early victory.

Again, thanks to Elihu Root, there was a military planning agency in 1917. There was no such agency in 1861. Though our General Staff had not attained full efficiency prior to the World War, it had accomplished much and was prepared to coördinate the great task of mobilizing the nation. Though it had wasted valuable time in exploiting the Calhoun-Scott-Uptonian military policy, it had finally constructed a sound plan for forming a great army of the people. When the first

call was made under the selective draft, the organized units of a great territorial army were prepared to receive the nation's manpower.

Another remarkable contrast between the Civil War and the World War is in the matter of political intrigue and pressure. There were hosts of "political" officers under Abraham Lincoln. There were few under Woodrow Wilson. But this was not because Abraham Lincoln was a politician while Woodrow Wilson was not. It was because in 1917 there was a preplanned system and a public opinion to support it which did not exist in 1861. When a Senator asked Secretary Cameron for an appointment for his son-in-law, the young man was generally appointed. It was all a matter of luck. There was no better alternative system. When a similar request came to Secretary Baker, the answer was simple. The aspirant was permitted to prove his own mettle in an officers' training camp. Established system is generally a sovereign cure for intrigue. But there was an especially strong public opinion to support system and to oppose intrigue in 1917. The whole people *knew that the fighting would be serious.* They wanted trained leadership for the sons they were sending to the Western Front.

4

In May, 1917, it became necessary for Secretary Baker to pick a general to go with the first troops to France. He realized that the officer he selected then would probably be the future commander of a great American Army. America's success in the war would probably hinge upon the wisdom of this appointment. The secretary therefore took the efficiency reports of all the higher officers and gave them his diligent personal study. In these records he found the history of each officer recorded year by year from his entry into the service—every task assigned him and how he performed it—his varied experience, his intelligence, his character, his tact, his industry, his energy, his capacity to lead, his resolution under difficulties, his physical power and endurance. After a careful examination of these records, he found that one man stood

out above all others as possessing the mental, moral, and physical qualities essential to great military responsibility. Here was a man who from the day he joined his troop as a second lieutenant had never failed in any task assigned him. This man was John J. Pershing, one of the junior major generals. The secretary's selection was favorably endorsed by his chief of staff and was then submitted to President Wilson. The President approved it at once. He remembered Pershing's recent service in command of a detachment in northern Mexico. There he had revealed to the President the highest quality of a soldier—loyal subordination to superior authority even when that superior's policy was different from that which he himself preferred.

But we must not blame Simon Cameron because he did not adopt Mr. Baker's method in 1861. He had no such opportunity. There was little systematic record of efficiency, and this, such as it was, was in the custody of Winfield Scott. From the then prevailing point of view, such a selection was none of Mr. Cameron's business. General Scott picked a colonel by the name of Robert E. Lee, but unfortunately the colonel was not available. With Lee gone, the records of probable efficiency were vague. All of the senior officers, including Scott himself, were superannuated. The abilities of most of their juniors were undeveloped, unmeasured, and unknown. There was no way to pick a March or a Harbord or a Liggett or a Bullard or a Dickman or a McAndrew or a Summerall or a Nolan from the military records of 1861.

5

And there was still another great contrast between the American military system in 1861 and the American military system in 1917. In 1861 there was but one man in America who had had thorough post-graduate training in the conduct of modern war. That man was Stonewall Jackson. His presence in the Army of Northern Virginia had made that army superior not only to all the Northern armies but to the Western army of the Confederacy as well. General Lee had recognized this officer's superior tactical gifts and acquire-

ments and had been wise enough to encourage the influence of his example throughout his command. He had exploited Jackson's superior acquirements as Washington had exploited Steuben's. It is largely the presence of this one master of the art of troop-leading that accounts for the fact that, in 1862, leadership in the Army of Northern Virginia was at least a year ahead of the other armies. If there had been one more Stonewall Jackson in the Mississippi Valley, it is doubtful if even Lincoln could have saved the Union. And when Jackson fell much of Lee's advantage was lost. Henceforward he, like the other generals, showed the need of a trained troop-leading staff.

But by 1917, systematic practice and training in military art was no longer unique in the American Army. By that time, there were many American officers whose training for the conduct of war was more thorough and more scientific than Stonewall Jackson's had been in 1861. The applicatory method of training and of measuring tactical capacity had been fully developed at Fort Leavenworth and later at the War College. Nor was the influence of this new practical method confined to the graduates of the Service Schools. Through them and through the Leavenworth "mailing list" it had been widely diffused throughout the service. Many ambitious officers had embraced it as a new and practical means of self-culture.

This development of command and general staff training through the applicatory method marks the greatest purely military contrast between the army of Abraham Lincoln and the army of Woodrow Wilson. In 1861 we not only had no army but had no trained overhead competent to train a great army and to lead it when trained. In 1917 we again had to create a great army, but we already had a trained army overhead prepared to train it and to lead it when trained. General Pershing had key men for his higher staffs, men trained and calibrated for their duties in time of peace. While the army was forming they were completing this training in the atmosphere of the front. Those of our friends and enemies who overlooked this fact were disposed to underrate our full military capacity until it was demonstrated at St. Mihiel and

in the Meuse-Argonne. General Pershing rested upon this fact from the beginning and was not to be cajoled or maneuvered from it. When he insisted upon American armies and Army corps under American commanders and staffs he was sure of his ground. He knew that in his higher staff officers he was as well-equipped as was any field marshal in Europe.

Our British cousins at least should have understood our position. They had studied the campaigns of Grant and Lee and Stonewall Jackson. They had been quite as incompetent in the Boer War as we were at about the same time in the War with Spain. Their war ministry and ours had revealed the same incompetency at the same time and for precisely the same cause. Their Lord Haldane and their Esher Commission had brought them reformed organization and the modern general staff institution just when Elihu Root was bringing the same gifts to us. If 1914 had found them somewhat regenerated, we too under the same gospel might prove to be born again.

6

When General Pershing sailed from America he was given a mighty responsibility. But he was given the fullest powers by the President and the Secretary of War. He knew that all of the resources of the nation were behind him. Now he must determine how and where and when these resources were to be employed. He must make the plans for our whole military activity in Europe. He must make the requisitions before America could begin to fill them.

And this must be done speedily. We were in one of the greatest crises of the war. Russia had collapsed. Mighty German reënforcements would soon be released for the Western Front. French attacks had recently failed. French morale was low. The British Battle was stalemate.

One of General Pershing's greatest gifts is capacity to use a staff. His staff at first was small but every man was fitted for his task. There were many great constructive problems. These he defined and gave each problem to a selected officer or to a selected group. He arranged for each group to have contact with the like service in the French and British organ-

izations. Thus he utilized their three years of war-won experience. And when he gave a man a task he trusted him to solve it and placed the fullest means at his disposal. He never nagged him. He judged only by results. In this way he quickly separated his "can-doers" from his "can't-doers." His "can-doers," once discovered, were given the freest hand. When a "can-doer's" project was approved, he was authorized to execute it with the full authority of the general's name.

And in those days of the most intense effort and multitudinous detail, General Pershing was never swamped by his task. His mind was always free for the big problems and the big decisions. He was free to consult with the French and British commanders, to visit the front, to weigh the greater strategy and the political background of the war. Thus while he was building his army in 1917 he was always preparing himself to command it in 1918.[1]

This detachment for great issues in the midst of countless details and responsibilities was made possible by staff organization. But even the best staff is not automatic. If General Pershing was not tied to his desk, nevertheless his desk was there and it was always burdened with pressing business demanding immediate dispatch. And indeed, General Pershing was always at this desk in the person of his *alter ego*, his chief of staff, General Harbord. General Harbord and his responsible assistants were a part of the commander's mind and will. Pershing's success was possible partly because he had this organized staff instrument but principally because he knew how to use it. The instrument was always his.

General Pershing reached Paris the middle of June, 1917. Before the middle of July the great organization project for the A. E. F. was dispatched to Washington. It called for a million men at the end of ten months and for an ultimate

[1]During the summer and autumn of 1917, while the Headquarters was absorbed in the great basic problems of organization and administration, the Operations Section of the General Staff, free from the pressure of current business, was already working on the tactical and strategic problems of 1918. For example, the general project for the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient was prepared by his staff and approved by General Pershing a full year before it was carried into effect.

army of three times that number. This was followed by plans for great seaport and railway and construction developments and other features of the great Service of Supply. Finally this was followed by a schedule of troop shipments fixing the order of arrival of the troops in France. All other activities of the future army were based upon the solid foundation of these great initial plans.

7

In August, 1917, the writer accompanied General Pershing to the Verdun front. As the guests of General Petain, we reached the headquarters of the French Second Army at Souilly the evening of August 19th. There we were present when the final orders were given for the morrow's attack upon the powerful German positions including "Mort Homme."

The orders were given by a little French colonel, the chief of staff of the Second French Army. Seated at a plain pine table with his map before him, he called up successively the chiefs of staff of the several army corps, received their reports, and gave them their final instructions. Nothing could give a better impression of the perfection and businesslike simplicity of the French staff organization. The pending attack was of the greatest importance to France and to the allied cause. Victory was imperative. It must restore the morale of the French Army which had been shattered by General Nivelle's defeat. It must establish the prestige of the new French commander, General Petain. And yet the final dispositions for this mighty effort were a matter of simple routine that could be left to subordinates. If the army chief of staff had been a shopkeeper selling cigarettes to the chiefs of the several army corps neither he nor they could have been more unconcerned and matter-of-fact.

"How about the demolitions on your front?" the little colonel would ask.

"The photographs show that the machine gun nests at X need a little more spraying."

"*Bon*, we'll help that with the army artillery just before dawn. Anything more? No. Next?"

And then the chief of staff of the next corps would come up to the table with his battle map.

The army commander, General Guillaumat, was present. But his martial burdens lay lightly upon him. Off in a corner of the room, he was holding a reception for his distinguished guests, Generals Petain and Fayolle and the new American commander. Guillaumat was doing the honors and presenting his corps commanders to General Pershing. His duties as a hospitable host apparently absorbed him entirely. Not once did any of the generals interfere with the battle arrangements. Once only General Petain approached the table. He asked a brief question, received an equally brief answer, and then resumed his small talk with his guest. In the meantime the corps staff officers speedily finished their business and were dismissed. This broth was not to be spoiled by too many cooks.

The Second Army had been preparing for this attack for weeks. There were great concentrations of artillery. Hundreds of airplanes had been aiding the preparations and would join in to-morrow's attack. Hundreds of trained staff specialists had been toiling for weeks and would toil even more to-morrow. It was with such mighty and skilled organizations as these that we must soon be prepared, if we were to do our part on the Western Front.

What was in General Pershing's mind I do not know. If he had any misgivings he kept them to himself. D'Artagnan himself could not have been more nonchalant in a group of his fellow Frenchmen. If he had had six army corps all ready to relieve Guillaumat, he could not have appeared more confident. There was nothing here to disturb his poise.

And yet on that same journey we had just visited the whole American army in France. It consisted of just one division down at Gondrecourt: a so-called regular army division, but newly formed and three-fourths full of inexperienced and untrained officers and men. It was still far from ready to send single battalions to serve at the front with French divisions. It would be five months before it could take over a division sector.

And our corps and army staffs were still nothing but projects. General Pershing had a few highly trained staff officers from the service schools but these must be reinforced by hundreds of specialists still untrained. One of the objects of this trip was to consult with General Petain as to the best place for a General Staff School. And this school was not established until two months later at Langres. But here again, thanks to the vision of Elihu Root, Pershing was able to plant a fruitful seed. He had a McAndrew trained and ready to create his army schools. McAndrew would find a Bjornstad trained and ready to educate selected officers for the General Staff. They both had been formed and calibrated for these very tasks at Leavenworth.

I knew that our plans were sound and I knew that the might of a great nation was back of them and would carry them through. But could it all be done in time? I found the answer in the poise and bearing of my chief. It was quite evident that he knew that it could and would be done.

8

Just thirteen months later, General Pershing made another journey to Souilly. This time he was not to be the guest of General Guillaumat. He went to the same office in the old *mairie*. But now it was his own headquarters as the commander of the First American Army. With three American army corps comprising fifteen divisions and two French army corps comprising six divisions, he held one hundred and fifty kilometers of the Western Front. His command extended from the meridian just west of the Argonne forest across the Meuse and the Moselle to Port-Sur-Seille, just south of Metz. Battle-scarred Verdun now lay in this American sector. And now with his fifteen American divisions, Pershing was about to launch the great decisive battle of the Meuse-Argonne.

What an amazing record had been written in the history of those thirteen months! Between those two visits to Souilly, that single partly trained division had grown into a mighty army. *This was the most gigantic feat in organization, military*

or otherwise, in the history of the world.[1] General Pershing had made his requisitions greatly and wisely. The whole American nation had filled them under the leadership of a great War President, a great War Minister, and a great Chief of Staff. What though there were mistakes and miscalculations and failures here and there? In spite of them the great structure was built in time and the great structure was sound.

Nor was this an untried army that lay to the north of Souilly in September, 1918. Some of its divisions had shared in finally checking the great German offensive. Gradually reënforced, they had become the spearhead of the counter-offensive that Foch was to maintain to the end. In August, 1918, General Pershing was at last able to assemble his scattered divisions and to form the First Army. On September 12th, now grown to a strength of 500,000 men, of whom 430,000 were Americans, it had made a victorious attack at St. Mihiel. It had there demonstrated that an American army under American commanders and American staffs was to have its full part in winning the war. It was now completing its preparations for the forty-five days battle that was to

[1]Referring to this great national achievement, Marshal Foch wrote as follows:

"Indeed, if, rightly or wrongly, the word miracle had been applied to the victory of the Allies at the Marne in the month of September, 1914, it can be applied equally to the miracle of American organization. . . .

"One thing which equally hastened and facilitated this organization was the spirit which presided over the recruiting of the men, and particularly of the reserve officers whom it was necessary to find in such great numbers. *In selecting them, attention was paid not only to the military capacity acquired during the course of instruction in the camps but also to the ability that each man possessed as a result of his function and occupation in civil life.*

"This is a very interesting point, as well as a lesson for those who have the task of preparing the rapid organization of the forces of a nation. It is certain that the practice of business, with its demand for qualities of decision and method, and its inculcation of the habit of command, gives an invaluable preparation for the conduct of troops in military operations. *In civil life, as in the army, it is the same general qualities that make the leader. Let the captain of industry secure the technical knowledge which he lacks in the art of warfare and he becomes easily a military commander.*" [Marshal Foch in Viereck's *As They Saw Us*, pp. 4–8. The italics are mine.]

clear the way to Sedan and to cut off the German retreat. It was this appearance of Americans, not as replacements, but as the proud soldiers of an American-led American Army that ended the war in November, 1918.

And here we find a practical demonstration of Clausewitz's dictum that war is a phase of politics. In January, 1918, President Wilson had published his Fourteen Points. They were not accepted by Germany at that time. Ludendorf was quite as eager for peace as Wilson, but he planned for a peace of another kind. But by October the 6th, the German government had changed its political faith. It was now eager to accept the Fourteen Points. It now found them full of convincing logic. And what was the new argument that had changed Germany's political views? What new political persuasion did President Wilson use? An American army was crashing its way toward the German communications. Here was a form of political disquisition that even a Ludendorf could understand.

9

How long does it take to make an American-led American Army? Three years seemed to be the answer in 1865. But we did better than that when we tried it again in 1917. Pershing's soldiers at St. Mihiel were of precisely the same military age as McClellan's soldiers at Antietam. Pershing with a newly formed headquarters had led a half million men as a well-organized team. McClellan with a year-old headquarters could not lead one eighth of that number in a coördinated attack.

Can there be any question as to the reason for this striking difference? General Pershing had a troop-leading staff trained in the practical business technique of modern war. This General McClellan did not have. When the First Army was formed, its chief of staff had been specifically trained and calibrated as competent to head a great troop-leading staff. He had been studying the strategic problem of the First Army for months. All of his principal assistants and the chiefs of staff of the army corps and divisions had been trained in the same school. They all had the same tactical

doctrine. They all thought in the same terms and spoke the same language.

The present writer reported at Souilly, early in October, 1918, to take command of an infantry brigade. While there he was invited by General Drum to take an auto ride toward the front. "You'll meet some old friends of yours," he said. In due course we stopped at a ruined farm-house where I met my old friends, Malin Craig, "Bill" Bjornstad, and "Rusty" Burtt. These three Staff College graduates were now the chiefs of staff of three American army corps—each of them more powerful and stronger in numbers than the Army of the Potomac ever was. These gentlemen had reported to Drum to receive General Pershing's orders for an important attack. Here was general staff work reduced to its utmost simplicity. It was even more snappy and businesslike than that I saw at Guillaumat's headquarters the evening before "Mort Homme." Except for an ominous rumble to the north of us, I might have thought that we were back at Leavenworth. It seemed just like a Staff College conference between the phases of one of the old map maneuvers. The technique and the talk were just the same—except that Drum now spoke for General Pershing and not for General "A"—and that the umpire this time was to be the God of Battles.

Here again was one of the fruits of Elihu Root's constructive vision. But what a pity that we did not keep it when Steuben first brought it to us long before Elihu Root was born!

CHAPTER XXVIII

AFTERMATH

I

On the 15th day of January, 1919, President Wilson sat down at the table with Lloyd George and Clemenceau to settle the terms of peace and to lay the foundations of a new world order. On the following day, in Washington, Mr. Wilson's Secretary of War, Mr. Baker, appeared before the House Military Affairs Committee. There with his chief of staff, General March, he supported the War Department's new bill for a standing army of more than half a million men.

Here is a most astonishing phenomenon. While the President is beginning negotiations with the high ideal of destroying militarism and ending war, his war minister is urging the only frankly militaristic programme ever proposed by an American administration to an American Congress. The reasons for this action are somewhat obscure, but in answer to a question by a member of the Committee Mr. Baker said:

> . . . We felt, however, that 500,000 men was the size of the Army which ought to be provided for, and in making the estimates we had in mind the possibilities of some part of the American Army being required for a more or less limited period to see that the terms of peace agreed upon were carried out. . . . An army of 500,000 men seemed to us the proper thing to recommend.[1]

Nor was this proposed military establishment to be a mere temporary force. The suggestion was made by several members of the committee that the situation might be met by retaining a portion of the existing war army in service for a limited period—thus leaving the question of permanent military policy and organization to the future. But this suggestion

[1]Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, H.R., January 16, 1919.

was not favorably received by Secretary Baker or General March. The organization outlined in the bill bore every mark of a permanent military establishment. The Administration continued to support this measure, until nearly a year later, when Congress abandoned it and prepared an Army Bill of its own.

2

The introduction of this administration bill marks a complete reversal of President Wilson's views on military policy. In his message to Congress at the outbreak of the World War, he had made an eloquent appeal for Washington's "citizenry trained and accustomed to arms." A year later, in another message to Congress, he had stated our traditional military policy with exceptional precision as follows:

> We regard war merely as a means of asserting the rights of a people against aggression. And we are as fiercely jealous of coercive or dictatorial power within our own nation as of aggression from without. We will not maintain a standing army except for uses which are as necessary in times of peace as in times of war; and we shall always see to it that our military peace establishment is no larger than is actually and continually needed for the uses of days in which no enemies move against us. But we do believe in a body of free citizens ready and sufficient to take care of themselves and of the government which they have set up to serve them.

It would be difficult to state Washington's military policy with more scientific precision than it was stated by President Wilson in the foregoing passage.

But now on the eve of his negotiations for peace, the Washingtonian system is completely abandoned. His "citizenry trained and accustomed to arms" is frankly to be replaced by a great standing army to be maintained by the American people in time of peace.

3

The explanation is again to be found in the incomplete historical equipment of Woodrow Wilson the historian. In

1914 and 1915 President Wilson had espoused Washington's military policy but was ignorant of his specific plans for making that policy effective. He was now about to abandon Washington's world policy, because through ignorance of its military factors he did not understand its relation to the problem of world peace.

Summarizing his world policy, Washington had said:

> Taking care to keep ourselves, *by suitable establishments on a respectably defensive posture*, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

It was a great tragedy for President Wilson and for the world that Woodrow Wilson the historian and the biographer of Washington had failed to discover the *suitable establishments* so carefully elaborated in order to assure us a *respectably defensive posture.*

If President Wilson had been equipped with Washington's philosophy of military institutions, he must have had a clearer insight into the problem of war and peace. He would have found that Washington sought not merely the defence of our soil, but the type of military institutions most appropriate to the international relations of a peace-furthering republic of free men. He would have found that while he was elaborating his *respectably defensive posture*, he wrote to his friend David Humphreys:

> My first wish is to see this plague of mankind [war] banished from the earth, and the sons and daughters of the world employed in more pleasing and innocent amusements than in preparing implements and exercising them for the destruction of mankind

and to the Marquis de la Rouerie, recently appointed to a high command in the French Army:

> My first wish is (although it is against the profession of arms, and would clip the wings of some of your younger soldiers who are soaring after glory) to see the whole world in peace, and the inhabitants of it as one band of brothers striving who should contribute most to the happiness of mankind.

In short, he would have found that Washington was a pacifist, but a strictly *scientific pacifist*—facing war as a *fact* in human nature, and seeking the practical median way between the Scylla of autocratic militarism and the Charybdis of national impotence.

4

At the close of the Revolutionary War Washington had applied himself to a scientific study of military institutions. To this task he brought his own ripe experience and practical genius as a soldier and statesman. Also, through Baron Steuben, he profited by the fullest expert knowledge of the military systems of Europe. His writings indicate that he had anticipated the Clausewitzian concept that war is merely a special phase of human politics. From this he passed to the inevitable corollary that every sound political system must include *suitable establishments* to meet that special phase of political action known as war.

Washington's writings also indicate that in his studies with Steuben he had recognized two distinct types of military organization—an *aggressive or war-provocative* type like the mercenary army of Frederick the Great, and a *defensive or peace-conservative* type like the citizen army of Switzerland. He recognized that the first of these two types is designed to reap political advantage through deliberate resort to war while the second is designed to prevent political action from taking that special violent form. Both Washington and Steuben sought this second or *peace-conservative* type of armament for the new American republic.

It is also apparent that Washington appreciated the internal or underlying distinction between *militaristic* and *non-militaristic* institutions. This distinction depends upon the relation of the professional soldier to the body politic. In militaristic systems, the influence of the professional soldier is predominant. In non-militaristic systems the influence of the professional soldier is restricted to the greatest possible degree consistent with effective national defence. Washington considered the militaristic system inconsistent with the genius of a peace-furthering republic such as he

sought to establish. He therefore proposed to form a non-militaristic citizen army to be led by carefully selected and suitably trained citizen officers. He proposed a limited number of professional soldiers to perform certain continuing duties which citizen soldiers cannot perform in time of peace. He therefore proposed a small regular army to serve as a constabulary for the Indian country. He also proposed a limited number of highly trained professional officers who would serve the citizen army of the future as Steuben had served the citizen army of the Revolution since the days of Valley Forge.

5

President Wilson had grasped the broad outlines of this Washingtonian system but he had no knowledge of its practical details. He was therefore unable to appraise the adequacy of such a system to meet the several war crises in our history.

While President Washington was urging his non-militaristic defence system upon Congress, the wars of the French Revolution were beginning in Europe. How would his citizen army have affected that situation? In the first place it must have compelled respect for our neutrality. We should have been impregnable against invasion and if either belligerent had forced us into war we should have been able to seize and hold Canada on the one hand or Louisiana and the Floridas on the other. In this event we should have been free from the insults and injuries that both belligerents heaped upon us. And, in the final result, could there have been a War of 1812? Would Great Britain have risked certain and summary expulsion from the North American continent? It is probable that Washington's "respectably defensive posture" would have been a highly effective peace measure in 1812. It was fully adequate to meet the situation presented by our first contact with a European World War.

And how about the Civil War, when reactionary Europe exulted in the hope that the American experiment in democracy was about to fail? If our military resources had been in negotiable form as Washington had sought to place

them, could there have been a serious movement toward secession? No. Not unless we believe that sensible men like Jefferson Davis were prepared to challenge available organized odds of four to one. In this situation there could have been no temptation to seek that form of political action which Clausewitz defines as war. The issues of the war could and would have been met by normal, peaceful, political means.

And how about the World War? Could there have been an autocratic threat to the balance of power if world democracy had been in a respectably defensive posture throughout the Nineteenth Century?

In this connection it is interesting to consider the adventure of Imperial France in Mexico. While American democracy was in the throes of civil war, Napoleon III had intervened in Mexican affairs and had established Maximilian upon an imperial throne. When our Civil War ended, the French were invited to withdraw, and they complied at once. Why? Because, for the moment, the American Republic was in a "respectably defensive posture." We had just disbanded a great citizen army which could come to the colors again at once. For the first time in our national history, the military might of the American nation was in negotiable form.

And this was our world rating when the new German Empire was established in 1870. In Moltke's calculations for that year, America was not a military negligible. And no doubt Bismarck and Moltke credited us with sufficient intelligence to believe that we would retain so obvious a political advantage. But by 1914 all this had changed. We had lost all weight in the balance of world power. In the German calculation of world conquest we could safely be ignored. Our enormous military resources were not in negotiable form. We had none of the *quick* assets with which Washington sought to support his ardent pacifism.

This was the situation when Colonel House visited the Kaiser on June 1, 1914. The colonel urged the Kaiser to sign the "Bryan Treaty" providing for arbitration and a "cooling-off period" for a year before hostilities could begin—and this two months before the invasion of Belgium, when the plans of Armageddon were all laid. The Kaiser replied:

"Germany will never sign such a treaty. Our strength lies in being always prepared for war at a second's notice. We will not resign that advantage and give our enemies time to prepare."

And why should a militaristic Kaiser heed American advice at a time when America was a military nonentity? But the situation would have been different had America adopted the Washingtonian system. She would not then have been a negligible quantity even in the calculations of the German General Staff. She would have been able to mobilize a defence army of at least a million men in three days. Under Steuben's teaching system this army would soon have been ready for offensive action. And she could have doubled this army every six months for several years. Had this been our organization since 1870, Germany must have reckoned on a very different balance of power.[1]

6

For the World War was simply the culmination of a century-old reaction against the modern democratic movement which had originated in America in 1775 and which entered Europe in the French Revolution. Autocracy was completely and consciously armed for this conflict with the appropriate military institutions of the aggressive type. Washington had proposed equally effective non-militaristic institutions for his modern republican state. But America had not adopted them and had not transmitted them to her sister democracies. Modern democracy was thus but half-organized.

Herein lies the true cause of the World War. It was like the interaction of a *high area* and a *low area* in producing a typhoon. There was a *high barometer* of aggressive military organization in the region of autocracy. There was a *low barometer* of under-militarization in the region of democracy. Hence the inevitable storm.

[1]Even so early as 1797, John Adams had said: "However we may consider ourselves, the maritime and commercial powers of the World will consider the United States of America as forming a weight in the balance of power of Europe, which never can be forgotten or neglected." [Message to Congress, May 16, 1797.]

If America and the British democracies had included true defensive arrangements in their political systems, the autocratic organization would not have had the stimulus of alluring opportunity. With Britain and America in a "respectably defensive posture" in 1914, the Central Powers could not have been tempted to resort to war. Furthermore, if the English-speaking democracies had been in a "respectably defensive posture" continuously since 1870, it would have been politically impossible to develop and maintain autocratic militarism even in Germany.

It was the lure of world conquest as a feasible military enterprise that made the German people submit to so great a social and economic burden. Without this lure, Germany must have modified her military institutions to meet true defensive requirements. This would not only have prevented the armament competition of the past half-century, but must have modified Germany's internal political organization. With no external political motive for maintaining a militaristic conquest machine, it could not have been maintained as a national school of subserviency to autocracy. The result must have been a gradual return to the liberal political ideals of 1848. It was the incomplete organization of modern democracy that made the War Lord and *Welt Macht* possible.

To a statesman cognizant of the "suitable establishments" upon which Washington based his respectably defensive posture, the lesson of the World War must have been obvious. The war had not only found us unprepared for our place in world affairs but had come largely because we were unprepared. By neglecting Washington's "respectably defensive posture," for more than a century we had neglected to exert a powerful and legitimate influence for world peace. And now if we would make amends in the future the obvious first step must be a return to his practical wisdom. It was just as sound in 1919 as it had been when he stated it in his Farewell Address. Our plight was not due to the inadequacy or the obsolescence of Washington's policy but to our failure to follow it.

Woodrow Wilson the historian had not discovered the fulness of this wisdom and therefore did not bring it to President

Wilson. Nor could the President or the Secretary of War obtain it from their military advisers. These officers, unfortunately, drew their military philosophy not from the real Washington, but from Emory Upton's pseudo-Washington. They had never explored Washington's median way between the extremes of Militarism and Pacifism.

7

And why did Wilson the historian ignore the military element in history? This is a most pertinent question. His early environment suggests a partial answer to this question. He grew up in the South when the South was sated with war. He began his historical studies at a time when there was a reaction against the old historical school with its over-portrayal of war and its over-adulation of military heroes—and like most reactions this reaction went too far. But there seems to have been something more than this—a peculiar mental attitude, an anti-military complex, a lack of interest in things military, a disposition to look away from the ugly fact of war and its baneful influence on human nature and in human history.

This led our historian to singular inaccuracies in his historical writing when he touched on military affairs. For example, in his *Division and Reunion*, he informs us that Virginia seceded rather than obey Lincoln's call for volunteers. But the fact is that she seceded several weeks before any volunteers were called. Again he says that the Northern volunteers, first called, were enlisted for only three months. The fact is that all of the volunteers called in 1861 were enlisted for three years. Again he says that a Massachusetts volunteer regiment was attacked in the streets of Baltimore on the 19th of April, 1861. But the Baltimore riots occurred several weeks before there were any volunteers in the Union service. Now all of these errors are misstatements due to uncritical research. There were 75,000 men called out before Virginia seceded, but they were state militia-men and not volunteers. They were called out for only three months because the President could not call them out for a longer period under

the existing militia laws. Here our author betrayed his ignorance of an important feature of our military and constitutional history—the distinction between militia and volunteers. To him, this was apparently a purely military technicality that did not interest him.

In his message to Congress on December 7, 1915, he made a more serious misstatement of historical fact where it had an important bearing on national policy. In the early part of this message he had made the remarkably concise statement of Washington's general military policy which we have quoted on page 342 above. But further on in connection with the administration's naval programme he said:

> We have always looked to the Navy of the country as our first and chief line of defence.

This statement of traditional naval policy is without historical foundation. Washington, in his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," had advocated a navy not for continental defence but solely to guard our overseas commerce and sea communications. His "well-regulated militia" was always his "first and chief line of defence." John Adams had confirmed Washington's naval policy in his statement to Congress that "a naval power, next to the militia, is the natural defence of the United States."[1] Jefferson and Madison had repeatedly urged a well-regulated militia composed of the younger men as an entirely sufficient defence against invasion. The conception of a navy as a first or chief line of defence, or as essential at all to our continental security, is of relatively recent origin. It did not arise in this country until our after traditional army of the people was replaced by the Calhoun-Scott futility, an expansible standing army.

8

But it is as a scientific student of political institutions that Woodrow Wilson's blindness to the *fact* of war in human affairs is most apparent. In his treatise, *The State*, we have a

[1]Message to Congress, May 16, 1797.

study of the evolution of political institutions from the earliest times. In this book there is no indication that the concept of war as a special phase of politics ever entered the author's mind. In the historic states that he describes he rarely refers to their military institutions. This is most singular in his description of Switzerland, to which he devotes considerable space. Here he gives no description of the democratic system of defence which is the sole *raison d'être* of the Swiss Federation's political existence. He does not observe that Switzerland actually maintains all of those "suitable establishments" which Washington proposed as essential for a modern republic in a "respectably defensive posture."

The author must apologize for a personal reminiscence that occurred to him when he first read Wilson's treatise on *The State*. When I was a cadet at West Point, I was required to study Michie's *Mechanics*. In due course we came to the "equation of the trajectory." This was a difficult problem in applied mathematics. But as it related to the path of a projectile, it seemed to have practical military value. It was interesting to find that a cannon ball or a pistol bullet or a baseball always seeks to follow a parabolic orbit. I therefore did my best to master this practical wisdom.

When I got to the recitation room my instructor questioned me on the trajectory. "Mr. Palmer," he asked, "have you ever acted as a cannoneer at the mortar battery?" When I replied that I had had that honor, he asked me if I could tell him anything about the path of the projectile. With great pride I asserted that the curve was a parabola. Then, with that insatiable curiosity so characteristic of the West Point faculty, the instructor asked me, *Why?*

Under the influence of judicious leading questions, I finally explained that the form of the curve was determined by the attraction of gravity—that given the angle of elevation of the gun and the initial velocity, we could plot every point on the curve and predict just where the descending shell would splash into the Hudson down near the old swimming hole at Washington Valley—and that a target placed at that point would most certainly get hit.

Having established me in this commanding position, the

instructor then proceeded to demolish it. "Do you really believe that, Mr. Palmer?" he asked. When I reaffirmed my confidence in Professor Michie's textbook and the laws of nature, the instructor said, "Mr. Palmer, that is *just* EXACTLY WRONG."

Then, as he recorded my mark in his notebook, the instructor explained that the curve could never be a parabola except *in vacuo*. No actual cannon ball could ever describe a parabola because actual cannon balls are shot into an atmosphere and not into a vacuum. A cannon ball fired from the moon might follow a parabolic orbit. But a cannon ball fired from the earth would have to content itself with a psuedo-parabola. "In short," said he, "the equation of the actual trajectory is what we call an *empirical* equation. It must have *empirical* constants for atmospheric pressure, and temperature and wind direction and wind velocity." Here my instructor gave me a most useful lesson, that in the world of reality, pure mathematics must be taken with an *empirical* grain of salt.

Years later, when I read Woodrow Wilson's treatise on *The State*, I found that he was discussing the State *in vacuo*. It was a discussion of internal or domestic politics uninfluenced by international atmosphere. Its political institutions were domestic institutions only. There was no consideration of the institutions that might be needed for that special phase of politics known as war. His equation for the state was therefore a pure conic section. It contained none of the empirical constants for the atmospheric perturbations due to air resistance or windage or temperature. And this was the equation that Wilson the scientific publicist and historian had prepared for Wilson the statesman. It might be a sovereign guide for a Peace President. But how would it serve him if destiny should make him a War President?

9

When Woodrow Wilson arrived at the peace table, he brought with him a lofty ideal. He would not only make a just peace treaty. He would establish a new world order free

from the curse of future war. But how would his equation for the state *in vacuo* fit the actual world situation? It contained none of the constants of atmospheric stress. He had always treated them as negligibles. Washington's empirical equation contained them all, but Wilson the historian had failed to find it. Would he be able now to measure the constants of reality and insert them in his formula in time? Would he make his equation fit the world, or would he have to change the world to fit his equation?

Let us see, for example, how Woodrow Wilson proposed to solve the problem of land armaments. He was right in believing that the question of armament has a profound influence upon the problem of war and peace. But he was wrong in believing that the question at issue is, in any real sense, a question of reducing the *quantity* of armament or the *number* of soldiers. He failed to discover that the real question at issue is a question of *type*—that one type of armament, even on a small scale, is provocative of war, and that another type of armament, though on the largest scale, is highly conservative of peace. He failed to see that an army of a whole people such as Washington proposed for America would assure national security and also support a peaceful world order; while a return to the small mercenary armies of Marlborough's day would be highly favorable to military adventure.

And it was this unscientific theory of armaments that found expression in the Covenant of the League of Nations. In the first paragraph of Article VIII we find:

> The members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the *reduction*[1] of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.[2]

[1]The italics are mine.

[2]This presents the theory that the member states should maintain armaments *too small* to provoke war but, at least, *large enough* to furnish their proper quotas upon the demand of the proposed superstate. What the American quota should be under this arrangement is, of course, uncertain. It is a fact, however, that when Article VIII was drafted, the Administration was urging an American standing army of more than half a million men.

The effort of the League of Nations to solve the problem of land armaments according to this formula has led to a deadlock. This is because the formula itself ignores the factor of *type* and overstresses the factor of *quantity*. It is therefore fundamentally unsound.

The inadequacy of this formula is especially apparent as applied to the question of conscription and trained reserves. It was the original contention of the American and British representatives that conscription automatically produced large armies. It was therefore argued that there could be no actual reduction of land armies unless conscription should be abolished. To this, of course, the conscription countries refused to consent. And they will probably always refuse. The people of France will always be too intelligent to abandon universal training for national defence.

And here it is especially unfortunate that President Wilson did not have Washington's empirical equation. Before and after his inauguration as President, Washington had advocated conscription and universal training. He considered them essential to the future peace and welfare of the American people. Nor was this the aberration of a single militaristic President. Jefferson repeatedly proposed classification by age, conscription, and universal training. Madison urged the same policy repeatedly both before and after the War of 1812.

10

This throws a new light on the League of Nations theory of armaments. Washington was as earnest a pacifist as any of the League's founders. But he was a scientific pacifist who based his system upon a purely empirical regard for reality. Evidently there are two kinds of conscription—one to be encouraged, the other to be discouraged. Washington would have amended the first paragraph of Article VIII somewhat as follows:

> The members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of standing armies and other militaristic organizations, dominated by professional soldiers, to the lowest possible limits. They also believe that the fullest en-

couragement should be given to non-militaristic citizen armies. Conscription as a means of expanding militaristic striking forces is a formidable menace to world peace. Conscription as a means of training young men for service in national citizen armies is a valuable agency of world peace.[1]

Such a statement of the armament problem would have pointed the way to gradual reform. It would not have been adopted at once, but it would not have led to a permanent deadlock. And even in France it would have found a sympathetic and growing public opinion. No intelligent Frenchman will ever consent to the abolition of universal training. But a considerable and growing party in France believes that the Republic should gradually adopt the Swiss military system—that young Frenchmen should always be trained for national defence but not to expand the ranks of a militaristic, war-provocative, striking force.

II

Modern history records two actual experiments bearing on the capacity of a superstate to prevent war between its member states. It is most unfortunate that Woodrow Wilson the historian did not bring the details of these experiments to the attention of Woodrow Wilson the world statesman. Here he might have found valuable scientific data bearing on the capacity of a League of Nations to prevent war. One of these experimental superstates is the Swiss Confederation. The other is the United States of America. Each is a federal union of sovereign states. Each of them was confronted by a war of secession and sought to prevent it. The Swiss superstate succeeded in this. The American superstate failed.

In 1847, a minority group of the Swiss cantons formed a new Confederacy or *Sonderbund* as it was called. The new Confederacy announced its secession from the old Federation. The Federal Diet, representing a majority of the cantons, ordered the new Confederacy to dissolve. The *Sonder-*

[1]This formula will encounter the resistance of many professional army officers throughout the world. For a practical solution of this difficulty, see Appendix II and particularly pages 399–401.

bund refused and mobilized. Both sides prepared for war. But this Swiss secession movement encountered difficulties. Switzerland was actually organized precisely as Washington had sought to organize the American Union. Throughout the cantons there was a "well-regulated militia," identical in all essentials with that which Washington had proposed for the American states. There was no standing army in Switzerland but all of the Swiss cantons were in a "respectably defensive posture."

Now with this organization, the potential military energy of the whole Swiss people was in negotiable form. If war should come the existing ballot majority would be negotiable instantly as a bullet majority of precisely the same dimensions. As this theoretical negotiability was actually manifested by the fact of mobilization, there was little temptation for the minority to resort to that special phase of political action which Clausewitz defines as war. The *Sonderbund* therefore revoked its ordinance of secession. Its bluff had been called. Men do not resort to war when they are certain of military defeat. The minority abandoned its military adventure and the sectional political difficulties were speedily adjusted by normal political means. Switzerland had demonstrated that a superstate *can* prevent interstate war when its member states are in a "respectably defensive posture."

The second experiment began in America in 1861. Again there was a sectional political controversy. Again a sectional minority determined to secede. But according to the formula stated in Section VIII of the Covenant of the League of Nations, war should have been impossible in this instance, because the American states were almost totally disarmed. Disarmament could hardly be more complete. Washington had been unable to place the military resources of the American people in negotiable form. Under the disarmament theory of the League of Nations, this was a most unfavorable environment for the generation of war. And yet, in spite of this handicap, arms were got and millions of men were taught to use them and, in proportion to her population, America enjoyed one of the bitterest and most destructive wars in the history of the world. Because of its disarmament, this

American superstate, with its executive, its Congress, and its Supreme Court, had failed to maintain peace in the one and only *casus belli* that ever divided its member states.

An analysis of these two experiments might have thrown an instructive light on the peace-conserving powers of a League of Nations. The obvious conclusions would seem to be:

FIRST, that disarmament is not unfavorable to the propagation of war.

SECOND, that highly developed armament of the right kind is highly conservative of peace.

THIRD, that even a superstate cannot prevent war unless its member states are in a "respectably defensive posture."

12

We are now prepared to understand the principal reason for Woodrow Wilson's tragic failure to achieve his high ideal as a world statesman. From his youth, Wilson the historian and political scientist had closed his eyes to the fact of war. He had not dug into this Tap-Root of human nature as Lincoln the unschooled empiricist had done. He had not studied war as a special phase of political action. He therefore did not understand that war and peace, like disease and health, are simply phases of the same thing. For years he had elaborated his study of the State but, unfortunately, it was the State *in vacuo*. In his study of democratic institutions he had ignored the institutional needs of the democratic state when confronted by the fact of war. And most tragic of all he did not examine the establishments essential to Washington's "respectably defensive posture" and did not understand their relation to our world policy. He therefore failed to perceive the only sanctions that can give effective support to a League of Peace composed of independent sovereign nations. Had he understood these things, could he have failed to lead the America of Washington and Lincoln to the Council Table of Mankind?

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

WASHINGTON OR UPTON

I

WASHINGTON had failed in his effort to establish a sound military system at the end of the Revolutionary War. The government was impoverished and the people were indifferent. Public sentiment did not respond to his appeal. But after the World War all this was changed. The returning veterans themselves insisted that the great citizen army in which they had served should be perpetuated. This was the main plank in the platform of the new American Legion. The American people, led by the organized veterans of the war, now demanded the permanent organization of Washington's Army of the People. Here was an opportunity for the War Department to correct the accumulated errors of more than a century. But unfortunately the War Department did not favor Washington's plan. It was rigidly committed to the Baker-March bill for a standing army of more than half a million men.

But the half million standing army found no support in Congress. The military committees of both Houses held extensive hearings on the military problem. These hearings revealed great popular interest in national defence but little or no sentiment for the administration's plan. It was obvious that this scheme for a great standing army was politically and economically impossible.

Finally in October, 1919, the Senate Military Committee determined to abandon further consideration of the War Department's bill. It decided to prepare a military measure of its own. None of its members had ever read Washington's detailed military plans, but as thoughtful American statesmen they understood his general views and determined to

base their bill upon them. And it is an amazing coincidence that the Senate bill, prepared under the leadership of Senator Wadsworth,[1] should propose an establishment almost identical, in principle, with that proposed by Steuben and approved by Washington in 1784.[2]

2

The Wadsworth Bill as it passed the Senate provided for a citizen army to comprise a first line, the National Guard; and a second line, the Organized Reserves. The units of the first line were to be fully organized and equipped in time of peace. The second line, to be called out only in the event of a great war, was to be partially organized in time of peace but its units were to be provided with their proper officers and non-commissioned officers. Both the National Guard and the Organized Reserves were to be organized into territorial divisions, as Steuben had proposed for his Continental Militia in 1784.

It was also provided that in organizing these divisions the veteran divisions of the World War were to be perpetuated and that the war veterans, so far as practicable, were to be the charter members of their respective war units. By these provisions, Senator Wadsworth's Committee sought to perpetuate the citizen army of the World War as Washington had sought in vain to perpetuate the Continental Army after the Revolution.

The bill also provided for four months of military training

[1]This bill was prepared by a Sub-Committee of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. The members of the Sub-Committee were Senators Wadsworth (Chairman), Sutherland, New, Frelinghuysen, Chamberlain, Fletcher, and Thomas. At the request of Senator Wadsworth, Colonel John McA. Palmer and Lieut. Colonel John W. Gulick were detailed by the Secretary of War as military advisers of the committee.

[2]Later, Secretary Baker discussed the Wadsworth Bill before the Senate Military Committee. Before expressing his disapproval of certain specific provisions, he said: "Perhaps I will not be misunderstood, however, if I say that I think it is the most statesmanlike attempt to organize the Army with which I have any acquaintance." (*Statement of Hon. Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, Jan. 21, 1920.*)

for all young Americans who might volunteer[1] to receive it, and for their subsequent assignment to organizations of the citizen army. In thus providing for voluntary training, the bill sought to establish the very system that President Wilson had proposed in his message of December 8, 1914.

In its provisions for the regular army the committee again returned to Washington's policy. It realized that professional soldiers within the United States have two functions. Some are needed in the training service of the citizen army and some are needed to perform certain military duties that cannot be performed by organizations of the citizen army in time of peace. The committee therefore proposed to divide the regular army into two distinct branches, one to be called the *Training Forces* and the other to be called *The Home Forces*. The *Training Forces* would specialize on the new problem of training citizen soldiers, while the *Home Forces* would be a *regular army proper* available for expeditions and other minor military emergencies.

This proposed subdivision of the professional personnel was a highly constructive proposal. It favored the specialization which is essential to efficiency and it favored an economical administration of the army. The committee was fully imbued with the Washingtonian principle that there should be as many professional soldiers as are strictly necessary but no more. By the proposed separate organization Congress would always be able to apply this important economic and political principle. It was now about to authorize 280,000 professional soldiers, but it considered this large number only temporarily necessary. The proposed separate organization would favor a gradual and strictly scientific reduction of the regular army proper, as world conditions settled and as the citizen army advanced in efficiency. Here were two distinct kinds of eggs. The committee proposed to poach them separately so that they could always be counted. To scramble

[1]As originally introduced in the Senate, the bill provided for universal military training. But voluntary training was substituted by amendments from the floor of the Senate and the bill finally passed in that form.

them or to make an omelet of them would make this highly desirable auditing process much more difficult.

It is also remarkable that the committee should propose another important feature of Baron Steuben's plan of 1784. It will be recalled that the Baron had proposed to divide the country, as it then existed, into three territorial departments in order to assure decentralized administration and supervision. Each of these departments was to include two or three legions (or divisions) of his Continental Militia or National Guard with decentralized machinery for military education and supply. None of the members of the Senate Military Committee and neither of their military advisers had ever studied Steuben's plan. It is therefore a remarkable coincidence that in its proposed Corps Areas the committee advocated Steuben's territorial organization and his decentralized machinery for developing and supervising a National Citizen Army.

3

Such were the main features of the Wadsworth bill when it passed the Senate. In the meantime the House had passed its own Army Bill. The House bill provided for a regular army of the same size as that proposed by the Senate but it contained none of the constructive proposals for a complete national defence system such as we have described above. It did not provide for a separate organization of the professional personnel into a training force and a regular army proper. It provided no machinery for the decentralized administration of a National Citizen Army such as the Senate had proposed in its Corps Areas.

When the House Bill reached the Senate, Senator Wadsworth moved that it be amended by striking out all of the House provisions except the enacting clause and that all of the Senate provisions be substituted for the House provisions. As so amended it passed the Senate. This action brought both Bills before a Conference Committee[1] which must now agree upon the final provisions of the law.

[1]The conferees for the Senate were Senators Wadsworth, Sutherland, New, Chamberlain, and Thomas. The House conferees were Mr. Kahn, Mr. Anthony, Mr. McKenzie, and Mr. Fields.

To present the new constructive features of the Senate bill to the House conferees was a difficult task. Congress was near adjournment and there was little time for further deliberation. But fortunately, the House conferees were favorably impressed with the Senate's organization. They recognized it as a sound plan based upon our traditional military policy. They accepted the principle that our traditional citizen army should frankly be made the foundation of our national defence. They also agreed that the principal function of the American professional soldier is to foster and promote the American citizen army. But they pointed out that the House was in no mood for further deliberation on military affairs even if time were available.

It was then suggested that the same thing might be accomplished by leaving all details of organization to the President. This would permit him, after due deliberation, to adopt all or any part of the organizational structure laid down in the Senate bill.

But who would actually exercise this discretion? The President would not be able to solve so technical a problem himself. He would therefore delegate it to the War Department. And this might not lead to the desired solution. Would the General Staff accept the Senate's military policy? What chance would George Washington have with the authors of the Baker-March bill?

The solution of this difficulty was found in another constructive feature of the Senate bill. It provided that in the preparation of all plans and policies affecting the citizen army, the professional officers of the General Staff should be assisted by an equal number of citizen officers from the National Guard and the Reserves. This would give George Washington an equal voice with Emory Upton in the counsels of the War Department. By this arrangement some message from the conscript fathers might be able to penetrate the Uptonian barrage that had surrounded Secretary Garrison and Secretary Baker. Future Secretaries of War, before rendering decisions on questions of national military policy, would be permitted to hear both sides of the question at issue.

This was accepted by the conferees. The committee then

prepared the final draft of the bill. In Sections 1, 3, and 3a they enabled the President to organize the Washingtonian military system as it had been outlined in detail in the Senate bill. In this form the bill passed both Houses of Congress as the National Defense Act of 1920.[1]

4

After the passage of the law, the War Department General Staff proceeded to formulate the new organization of the army of the United States. As prescribed by the law, officers of the citizen army[2] were detailed as temporary members of the War Department General Staff and participated in this important work. The new organization as finally approved included all of the essential features of the Wadsworth bill. The National Guard was finally given the scientific territorial organization that Baron Steuben had recommended in 1784. The National Army divisions of the World War were perpetuated in the new Organized Reserve divisions. Nine Corps Areas were formed. And finally the mobile regular army was given the functional organization laid

[1]The full intent of this law cannot be understood without reading it in connection with the Wadsworth bill as it passed the Senate. There the organizational structure accepted by the Conference Committee is clearly and logically described. These detailed descriptive provisions are replaced by general provisions in the final Act, and the whole document is further obscured by the fact that the House conferees were required, under their instructions, to draft all new provisions as amendments to the National Defense Act of 1916. This made it impossible to present the new structure in a logical or readable order. If the Constitutional Convention of 1787 had been required to write the new Constitution of the United States as amendments to the Articles of Confederation, it could not have encountered a more difficult literary task.

[2]These officers were Colonel Franklin W. Ward, N. Y. National Guard; Colonel George C. Rickards, Penna. National Guard; Colonel M. A. Reckord, Md. National Guard; Colonel Walter P. Bare, Alabama National Guard; Lieut. Colonel Guy M. Wilson, Michigan National Guard; Colonel Frank M. Rumbold, Missouri National Guard; Major John W. Page, Texas National Guard; Colonel Creed C. Hammond, Oregon National Guard; Lieut. Colonel J. B. Goodman, Reserve Corps (Colorado); Major Geo. P. Gurley, Reserve Corps (Minnesota); Lieut. Colonel C. R. Wilson, Reserve Corps (Ohio); Captain C. Lawson Reed, Reserve Corps (Ohio).

down in the Senate plan. In each Corps Area there was to be a division of the regular army, proper, and a separate "Training Center." In this Training Center selected professional officers and men were to specialize on the training problem of the citizen army. The new organization was a modern adaptation of the plans originally elaborated by Washington and Steuben. It was also a complete and final development of the organization proposed in the Stimson Plan of 1912.

5

But it soon became necessary to modify this organization. In the Act of 1920, Congress had authorized a regular army of 280,000 men. It soon became apparent that this number must be reduced. It was a much larger force than was needed in time of peace. And it was too expensive to meet the budget situation. There was a reduction in 1921 and a further reduction would be necessary in 1922. This brought the question of reorganization up to the War Department. Under the law, details of organization were left to the President. How should he be advised to reorganize the regular army at the new reduced strength?

Two methods of reduction were proposed. Under the first proposal, the reduction would be applied to the regular army, proper. Under the new authorized strength there would not be enough men for nine effective divisions. The cut should therefore be made by reducing the number of regular army divisions, leaving the rest of the organization intact. This we may call the Washingtonian solution of the problem.

Under the second proposal, the nine-division regular army should be retained, so far as practicable, by reducing the peace strength of existing organizations. This would leave a skeleton organization for future expansion. This we may call the Uptonian solution of the problem.

The writer, who was then on duty in the War Department, favored the Washingtonian solution. He had served as military adviser to the Senate Military Committee while the Wadsworth bill was in preparation and was still on that duty

when the House and Senate bills were in conference. He believed that the Washingtonian solution of the problem would best meet the Congressional intent. He believed that Congress intended that only the standing army, proper, should be reduced and that the new structure for developing a national citizen army should not be impaired.

But there were strong practical arguments for the Uptonian solution of the problem and that solution finally prevailed. It was decided to retain the nine-division standing army, so far as practicable, in skeletonized form. In order to retain as many effective soldiers as possible for this highly diluted new army, the new training centers were broken up and their officers and men were scrambled into the regular army, proper.

6

At the time this decision was made, I considered it inexpedient and inconsistent with the primary intent of the law.[1] But as that intent was nowhere definitely stated, I considered that either method of reducing the regular army was within the discretion of the President. But in reviewing the matter in the light of further study of our national military history and policy, I am now convinced that the army reorganization of 1922 was illegal.

For the reorganization of 1922 involved much more than a reduction of the regular army. It seriously affected the training and development of the citizen army. As we have seen, the original organization of 1920 had been made by joint committees of regular and citizen officers as prescribed by law. In that organization a portion of the regular army had been set apart to train and develop the citizen army. In adopting this feature, the joint committees actually adopted one of the essential features of the Senate plan which had been accepted in principle by conferees from the two Houses. In abolishing this organization in 1922, the President changed the whole training system of the citizen army. He abolished a

[1]For the intent of the law as interpreted by President Harding, Secretary Weeks, and General Pershing see *Statesmanship Or War*, Palmer, pp. 167–176.—*The Publishers.*

legally established relation between the regular army and the citizen army and replaced it by another relation entirely different in kind. In short, he abandoned the Washingtonian system and replaced it by the Uptonian system. The original plan had been prepared with the participation of citizen officers as prescribed by law. It was therefore not lawful to replace that plan by another plan, entirely different in kind, which had been prepared by regular army officers alone and without the formal participation of citizen officers.

The plan of 1922 affected the citizen army directly by destroying a constructive agency designed for its scientific development. But it affected it even more seriously indirectly. Under our budget system, the money available for the whole military establishment is limited. Under this system, the more expensive the regular army, the less money is available for developing the citizen army. In the reorganization of 1922, the regular army was organized as a skeletonized army of the Uptonian type instead of as an effective army of the Washingtonian type. Now an expansible Uptonian standing army of any given enlisted strength is much more expensive than a Washingtonian standing army of the same enlisted strength.[1] It requires more officers, more overhead, more administration, more regimental organizations and therefore more posts, more barracks and more quarters.

Since it replaced the Washingtonian system by the Uptonian system in 1922, the War Department has expended large sums in supporting a skeletonized standing army that might otherwise have gone to the development of the National Guard and popular military training. In short, the growth of our traditional Washingtonian system has been effectively starved by the Uptonian system. It would seem that in determining the relative importance of proposed items of expenditure, as well as in matters of organization and policy, the voice of the citizen army should be heard. Here too the President should be permitted to consult George Washington as well as Emory Upton.

[1]For the details of a Washingtonian military organization as it might be established under authority of the National Defense Act of 1920, see *Statesmanship Or War*, Palmer, pp. 152–166.—*The Publishers.*

In rejecting the Baker-March bill in 1919, Congress formally rejected the Uptonian system. In passing the National Defense Act of 1920, as it was finally settled in conference, Congress sought to establish the Washingtonian system. But actually the President's discretionary powers have been only partially exercised in the direction that Congress intended. Our actual military organization is an astonishing hodge-podge of two mutually antagonistic systems.

From a purely military standpoint, it is possible to construct an effective military system on either the Washingtonian or the Uptonian plan. But a satisfactory solution is hardly to be expected from an illogical and fortuitous mixture of the two. Every step in this direction must lead to a waste of public money in time of peace and a most dangerous uncertainty upon the outbreak of war.

7

Either the Washingtonian or the Uptonian system can be constructed under the discretionary powers granted to the President in the Act of 1920. It would therefore be interesting to consider how the exponent of each system would act if called upon to exercise that discretion.

In the first place, Upton would abolish the National Guard and would completely abandon the constitutional militia as a part of his national defence organization. Washington, on the other hand, would recognize the National Guard as his own "well-regulated militia" in the special form that he so strongly endorsed in Steuben's plan of 1784. That it has spontaneously grown to such vigor after more than a century of official neglect and discouragement, he would accept as a complete vindication of his own judgment and foresight. He would therefore develop it as the primary element of his national defence system.

Upton would recognize the Organized Reserves as the centralized federal volunteer force that he advocated in his books. He would so exploit it as to replace the National Guard. He would draw its officers, so far as practicable, from the regular army. All of its general and field officers and, so

far as practicable, all of its captains, would be assigned from the professional establishment. He would have no place for citizen officers except in the lower grades. Washington, on the other hand, would accept the Organized Reserves as a convenient peace cadre for a great emergency requiring more troops than can be maintained conveniently in the peace establishment of the National Guard.

Upton would approve a skeletonized regular army as the essential feature of his military policy. Washington would abolish the skeletonized organization entirely and would maintain complete and effective units only, enough of them to do those things that citizen soldiers cannot be expected to do in time of peace—so many and no more.

Upton would develop the Citizen Training Camps and the training system in our schools and colleges as sources of personnel for the Organized Reserves and as a means of filling the ranks of skeletonized and inactive regular army units. Washington would recognize these training agencies as a modern expression of the system of military education which he and Steuben had devised for the development of a "well-regulated militia." He would therefore use them to supplement the training facilities of the National Guard. He would tolerate no expenditure for popular military training except as a direct means of perfecting his "well-regulated militia." Under the Washingtonian system, the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Organized Reserves would be men who had had their training earlier in the National Guard. It would therefore be unnecessary to provide elaborate and expensive training facilities for them. Washington would make the National Guard an entirely sufficient training school for the whole citizen army.

Both Upton and Washington would recognize the importance of military aviation. In forming his air service, Upton would demand as many professional officers as possible. Most of Washington's military aviators would be citizen soldiers like Colonel Lindbergh. He would maintain no more professional air soldiers than would be absolutely necessary in order to accomplish this primary object.

In mobilizations for minor emergencies, Upton would seek

means of filling the ranks of skeletonized and inactive units in the regular army. But there would be no such units in Washington's regular army. He would secure additional forces for minor expeditions by drawing appropriate quotas of officers and men from the National Guard and the Organized Reserves just as General Knox proposed to draw them from his "Advanced Corps" and his "Main Corps." In this way, Washington would enable adventurous citizen soldiers of all grades to get the experience of occasional active service.

Both Upton and Washington would assign important duties to professional officers. Upton, following his model which he found in Prussia, would give them a virtual monopoly of all military leadership. Washington would make them primarily national teachers like Steuben, through whom he would diffuse military knowledge throughout the nation, and by whom he would seek out and foster the latent military genius of the people themselves. Upton would need many more professional officers; but Washington would give his a higher mission and one more consistent with the genius of republican institutions.

The first step toward effective national defence is a definite and final choice between Washington and Upton. This choice depends upon political considerations and should therefore be made by the statesman. If the statesman decides upon the Washingtonian system this in itself will lead inevitably and automatically to effective defence at minimum cost. But he who would create an effective citizen army should remember the Virgilian maximum: "*Those can who think they can.*" If the task is entrusted to leaders like Washington and Steuben and Grant and Stonewall Jackson who think it can be done and want to do it, speedy progress may be expected. But if it be entrusted to even the ablest men who, like Scott and Sherman and Upton, think that it cannot be done because they want to do something else, progress will not be so rapid.

THE END

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

WASHINGTON'S "SENTIMENTS ON A PEACE ESTABLISHMENT"[1]

No. 46. To Lt. Col. Alexn. Hamilton, Chairman of Commtee. of Congress.

Newburgh, 2 May, 1783.

SIR:

A necessary absence from Camp and several unavoidable interruptions have been the occasion of, and must be my apology for withholding the enclosed thoughts on a peace establishment so long.

If they will afford any assistance, or contain anything satisfactory, I shall think my time and labour well spent.

I have the honour to be Sir
Your Most Obt. Serv.
G. WASHINGTON.

No. 47. SENTIMENTS ON A PEACE ESTABLISHMENT *inclosed to a Committee of Congress in the next preceding letter.*

A Peace Establishment for the United States of America may in my opinion be classed under four different heads viz:

First. A regular and standing force, for Garrisoning West Point & such other Posts upon our Northern, Western, and Southern Frontiers, as shall be deemed necessary to awe the Indians, protect our Trade, prevent the encroachment of our Neighbours of Canada and the Florida's, and guard us at least from surprizes; Also for security of our Magazines.

Secondly. A well organized Militia; upon a Plan that will

[1]From Washington's "Barrack Book," now in the Library of Congress.

pervade all the States, and introduce similarity in their Establishment, Maneuvres, Exercise and Arms.
Thirdly. Establishing Arsenals of all kinds of Military Stores.
Fourthly. Academies, one or more for the Instruction of the Art Military; particularly those Branches of it which respect Engineering and Artillery, which are highly essential, and the knowledge of which is most difficult to obtain. Also Manufactories of some kinds of Military Stores.

Upon each of these, and in the order in which they stand, I shall give my sentiments as concisely as I can, and with that freedom which the Committee have authorized.

Altho' a *large* standing Army in time of Peace hath ever been considered dangerous to the liberties of a Country, yet a few Troops, under certain circumstances, are not only safe, but indispensably necessary. Fortunately for us our relative situation requires but a few. The same circumstances which so effectually retarded, and in the end conspired to defeat the attempts of Britain to subdue us, will now powerfully tend to render us secure. Our *distance* from the European States in a great degree frees us of apprehension from their numerous regular forces and the Insults and dangers which are to be dreaded from their Ambition.

But, if our danger from those powers was more imminent, yet we are too poor to maintain a standing Army adequate to our defence, and was our Country more populous & rich, still it could not be done without great oppression of the people. Besides, as soon as we are able to raise funds more than adequate to the discharge of the Debts incurred by the Revolution, it may become a question worthy of consideration, whether the surplus should not be applied in preparations for building and equipping a Navy, without which, in case of War, we could neither protect our Commerce, nor yield that assistance to each other, which, on such an extent of Seacoast,[1] our mutual safety would require.

Fortifications on the Sea Board may be considered in two points of view, first as part of the general defence, and next, as

[1]This was true in Washington's day when there was no coast-wise communication by railroad or improved highway.

securities to Dock Yards, and Arsenals for Ship Building, neither of which shall I take into this plan; because the first would be difficult, if not under our circumstances, impracticable; at any rate amazingly expensive. The other, because it is a matter out of my line, and to which I am by no means competent, as it requires a consideration of many circumstances, to which I have never paid attention.

The Troops requisite for the Post of West Point, for the Magazines, and for our Northern, Western, and Southern Frontiers, ought, in my opinion, to amount to 2631, Officers of all denominations included; besides the Corps of Invalids. If this number should be thought large, I would only observe: that the British Force in Canada is now powerful, and, by report, will be increased; that the frontier is very extensive; that the Tribes of Indians within our Territory are numerous, soured and jealous; that communications must be established with the exterior Posts; And, that it may be policy & economy, to appear respectable in the Eyes of the Indians, at the commencement of our National Intercourse and Traffic with them. In a word, that it is better to reduce our force hereafter, by degrees, than to have it to increase after some unfortunate disasters may have happened to the Garrisons; discouraging to us, and an inducement to the Enemy to attempt a repetition of them.

Besides these considerations, we are not to forget, that altho' by the Treaty, half the Waters, and the free navigation of the Lakes appertain to us, yet, in case of a rupture with Great Britain we should in all probability find little benefits from the communications with our upper Posts, by the Lakes Erie and Ontario; as it is to be presumed, that the Naval superiority which they now have on those Waters, will be maintained. It follows as a consequence then, that we should open new or improve the present half explored communications with Detroit and other Posts on the Lakes, by the Waters of the Susquehannah, Potowmack or James Rivers, to the Ohio, from whence, with short Portages, several communications by Water may be opened with Lake Erie. To do which, Posts should be established at the most convenient places on the Ohio. This would open several doors for

the supply of the Garrisons of the Lakes: and is absolutely necessary for such others as may be tho't advisable to establish upon the Mississippi. The Ohio affording the easiest, as well as the safest route to the Illinois Settlements, and the whole Country below on the Mississippi, quite to our Southern boundary.

To protect the Peltry and Fur Trade, to keep a watch upon our Neighbours, and to prevent their encroaching upon our Territory undiscovered, are all the purposes that can be answered by an extension of our Posts, at this time, beyond Detroit, to the Northward or Westward: but a strong Post on the Scioto, at the carrying place between it and the River Sandusky, which empties into Lake Erie, mentioned in Hutchin's Description of that Country, page 24, and more plainly pointed out by Evans's Map, is indispensably necessary for the security of the present settlers, and such as probably, will *immediately* settle within those Limits. And by giving security to the Country and covering its Inhabitants, will enable them to furnish supplies to the Garrisons Westward & Northward of these Settlements, upon moderate and easy Terms.

The 2,631 Men beforementioned, I would have considered to all Intents and purposes as Continental Troops; looking up to Congress for their Orders, their pay, and supplies of every kind. The Infantry of which, being 1908 and, composing four Regiments may be thrown into the following disposition.[1]

Not having that *particular* knowledge of the situation of the Southern and Western Boundaries of the Carolinas and Georgia, which is necessary to decide on the Posts to be established in that District, the allotment of only one Regiment thereto, may be judged inadequate; should that be the case, a greater force may be established and a sufficient allowance made them.

The above establishment differs from our present one in the following instances, viz: The exclusion of the light company and reducing a sergeant and 18 privates from each of the Battalion Companies, and giving a Chaplain to each

[1]The table is given on pages 380 and 381.

Regiment instead of a Brigade. If it should be asked why the reduction of Non Commissd. Officers and Privates is made, while the Commissioned Officers remain the same? It may be answered, that the number of Men which compose the Infantry, will be sufficient for my Calculation, and that the situation of our Frontiers renders it convenient to divide them into so many Corps as have been mentioned, for the ease and propriety of Command. I may also say, that in my opinion, the number of our Commissioned Officers, has always been disproportionate to the Men. And that in the detached State in which these Regiments must be employed, they cannot consistently with the good of Service be reduced.

It may also be observed, that in case of War and a necessity of assembling their Regiments in the Field, nothing more will be necessary than to recruit 18 Men to each Company and give the Regiment its flank Company. Or if we should have occasion to add strength to the Garrisons, or increase the number of our Posts, we may augment 900 Men including Serjeants, without requiring more than the Officers of 4 Companies, or exceeding our present Establishment. In short, it will give us a number of Officers well skilled in the Theory and Art of War, who will be ready on any occasion, to mix and diffuse their knowledge of Discipline to other Corps, without that lapse of Time, which, without such Provision, would be necessary, to bring entire new Corps acquainted with the principles of it.

Besides the 4 Regiments of Infantry, one of Artillery will be indispensably necessary. The Invalid Corps should also be retained. Motives of humanity, Policy and justice will all combine to prevent their being disbanded. The numbers of the last will, from the nature of their composition, be fluctuating and uncertain. The establishment of the former will be as follows, viz.[1]

To this Regiment of Artillery should be annexed 50 or 60 Artificers of the various kinds which will be necessary, who may be distributed in equal numbers into the different Companies and being part of the Regiment, will be under the

[1]The table is given on page 382.

ESTABLISHMENT & DISPOSITION OF FOUR REGTS. OF INFANTRY, 1908 MEN INCLUDING OFFICERS

Disposition	Officers												Non Comd. Officers							
	Commissioned						Staff												Rank & File	Total
	Colonel	Lt. Colonel	Major	Captains	Lieuts.	Ensigns	Chaplain	Adjutant	P. Master	Qu. Master	Surgeon	Mate	Sergt. Major	Qu. M. Sergt.	Drum Major	Fife Major	Sergeants	Drum & Fifes		
Penobscot or St. Croix or both. . . .		1		3	3	3						1	1	1			9	6	150	
North End of Lake Champlain . . .	1		1	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	12	8	200	
Connecticut River near the 45th degree .				1		1											2	1	30	
Ticonderoga					1												1	1	20	
Establishment & Strength	1	1	1	8	8	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	16	400	477
Niagara	1		1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	9	6	150	
Oswego				1		1											2	1	30	

Fort Erie No. end of Lake Erie					1												1	1	20	
Detroit		1		3	3	3						1	1	1			9	6	150	
Streights between Lakes Huron & Superior				1	1	1											3	2	50	
Establishment & Strength	1	1	1	8	8	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	16	400	477
Fort Pitt				1		1											2	1	30	
Mouth of the Scioto					1												1	1	20	
Portage between Scioto & Sandusky	1		1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	9	6	150	
Mouth of Kentucky or the Rapids				1		1											2	1	30	
Mouth of the Ohio or near it					1												1	1	20	
Height at the mouth of the River Illinois		1		3	3	3						1	1	1			9	6	150	
Establishment & Strength	1	1	1	8	8	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	16	400	477
To be disposed, as those who are best acquainted with the Frontiers of the Carolinas & Georgia may direct.	1	1	1	8	8	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24	16	400	477
Establishment & Strength of 4 Regts.	4	4	4	32	32	32	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	96	64	160	1908

The geographical disposition of these four regiments is illustrated in the map following page 386.

direction and command of the Commanding Officer, to be disposed into different services as Circumstances shall require. By thus blending Artificers with Artillery, the expence of additional Officers will be saved; and they will answer all the purposes which are to be expected from them, as well as if formed into a distinct Corps.

The Regiment of Artillery, with the Artificers, will furnish all the Posts in which Artillery is placed, in proportionate numbers to the strength and importance of them.[1] The

ESTABLISHMENT FOR ONE REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY

Officers																							
Commissioned							Staff						Non Commissioned										
Colonel	*Lieut. Colonel*	*Major*	*Captains*	*Capts. Lieuts.*	*1st Lieutenants*	*2nd Lieutenants*	*Chaplain*	*Adjutant*	*Pay M.*	*Qu. Master*	*Surgeon*	*Mate*	*Serjt. Major*	*Qu. M. Serjeant*	*Drum Major*	*Fife Major*	*Serjeants*	*Corporals*	*Bombardiers*	*Gunners*	*Drums & Fifes*	*Matrosses*	*Total*
1	1	1	10	10	10	30	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	60	60	60	60	20	390	723

residue, with the Corps of Invalids, will furnish Guards for the Magazines, and Garrison West Point. The importance of this last mentioned Post is so great, as justly to have been considered, the key of America; It has been so pre-eminently advantageous to the defence of the United States, and is still so necessary in that view, as well as for the preservation of the Union, that the loss of it might be productive of the most ruinous consequences. A Naval superiority at Sea and on Lake Champlain, connected by a chain of Posts on the Hudson River, would effect an entire separation of the States on each side, and render it difficult, if not impracticable for them to co-operate.

Altho' the total of the Troops herein enumerated does not amount to a large number, yet when we consider their de-

[1]The more important of the frontier posts would be equipped with cannon to be manned by suitable detachments from the Artillery regiment.

tached situation, and the extent of Country they are spread over: the variety of objects that are to be attended to, and the close inspection that will be necessary to prevent abuses, or to correct them before they become habitual; not less than two General Officers in my opinion will be competent to the Duties to be required of them. They will take their Instructions from the Secretary of War, or Person acting at the head of the Military Department, who will also assign them their respective and distinct Districts. Each should twice a year visit the Posts of his particular District, and notice the condition they are in, Inspect the Troops, their discipline and Police, Examine into their Wants, and see that strict justice is rendered them and to the Public, they should also direct the Colonels, at what intermediate Times they shall perform the like duties at the Posts occupied by the Detachments of their respective Regiments. The visiting General ought frequently, if not always, to be accompanied by a skillful Engineer, who should point out such alterations and improvements as he may think necessary from time to time, for the defence of any of the Posts; which, if approved by the General, should be ordered to be carried into execution.

Each Colonel should be responsible for the Administration of his Regiment; and when present, being Commanding Officer of any Post, which is occupied by a detachment from his Regt., he may give such directions as he may think proper, not inconsistent with the Orders of his Superior Officer, under whose general superintendence the Troops are. He will carefully exact Monthly Returns from all detachments of his Regiment, and be prepared to make a faithful report of all occurrences, when called upon by the General Officer in whose Department he may be placed and whose instructions he is at all times to receive and obey. These Returns and Reports, drawn into a General one, are to be transmitted to the Secretary at War, by the visiting General, with the detail of his own proceedings, remarks and orders.

The three Years Men now in service[1] will furnish the pro-

[1]Some of the soldiers then in the Continental Army had been enlisted for the duration of the war, and would therefore be entitled to their discharge upon the establishment of peace with Great Britain.

posed Establishment, and from these, it is presumed, the Corps must in the first Instance be composed. But as the pay of an American Soldier is much greater than any other we are acquainted with; and as there can be little doubt of our being able to obtain them in time of Peace, upon as good Terms as other Nations, I would suggest the propriety of inlisting those who may come after the present three years Men, upon Terms of similarity with those of the British, or any other the most liberal Nations.

When the Soldiers for the War have frolicked a while among their friends, and find they must have recourse to hard labour for a livelyhood, I am persuaded numbers of them will reinlist upon almost any Terms. What ever may be adopted with respect to Pay, Clothing and emoluments, they should be clearly and unequivocally expressed and promulgated, that there may be no deception or mistake. Discontent, Desertion and frequently mutiny, are the natural consequences of these; and it is not more difficult to know how to punish, than to prevent these inconveniences, when it is known that there has been delusion on the part of the Recruiting Officer, or a breach of compact on the part of the public. The pay of the Battalion Officer's is full low, but those of the Chaplain, Surgeon and Mate are too high; and a proper difference should be made between the Non-Commissioned Officers (serjeants particularly) and Privates, to give them that pride and consequence which is necessary to command.

At, or before the Time of discharging the Soldiers for the War, the Officers of the Army may signify their wishes either to retire upon the Half pay, or to continue in the service; from among those who make the latter choice, the number wanted for a Peace Establishment may be selected; and it were to be wished, that they might be so blended together from the several Lines, as to remove, as much as possible, all Ideas of State distinctions.

No Forage should be allowed in time of Peace to Troops in Garrison, nor in any circumstances, but when actually on a March.

Soldiers should not be inlisted for *less* than three Years, to

commence from the date of their attestations; and the more difference there is in the commencement of their terms of service, the better; this Circumstance will be the means of avoiding the danger and inconvenience of entrusting any important Posts to raw Recruits unacquainted with service.

Rum should compose no part of a Soldier's Ration; but Vinegar in large quantities should be issued. Flour or Bread, and a stipulated quantity of the different kinds of fresh or salted meat, with salt, when the former is issued, is all that should be contracted for.

Vegetables they can, and ought to be compelled to raise. If spruce, or any other kind of small Beer, could be provided, it ought to be given gratis, but not made part of the compact with them. It might be provided also, that they should receive one or two days fish in a Week, when to be had; this would be a saving to the public, (the Lakes and most of the Waters of the Ohio & Mississippi, abounding with fish) and would be no disservice to the Soldier.

A proper recruiting fund should be established, from which the Regiment may always be kept complete.

The Garrisons should be changed as often as it can be done with convenience; long continuance in the same place is injurious. Acquaintances are made, Connections formed, and habits acquired, which often prove very detrimental to the service. By this means, public duty is made to yield to interested pursuits, and real abuses are the Result. To avoid these Evils, I would propose, that there should be a change made in every Regiment once a Year, and one Regiment with another every two Years.

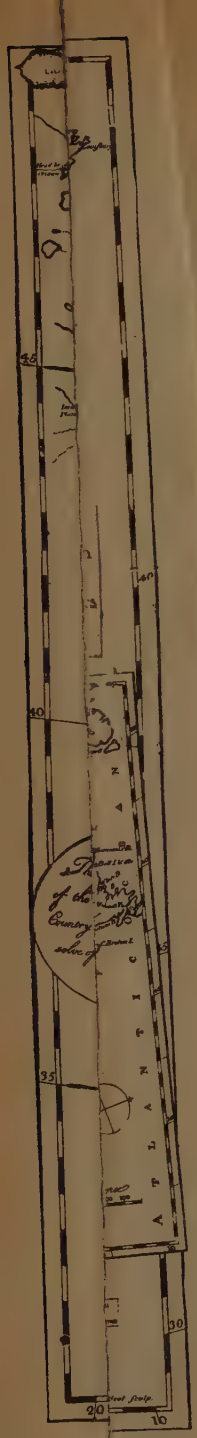
An Ordinance for the service of Troops in Garrison, should be annexed to our present Regulations for the order & discipline of the Army. The latter should be revised, corrected & enlarged so as to form a Basis of Discipline under all circumstances for Continental Troops, and as far as they will apply, to the Militia also; that one uniform system may pervade all the States.

As a peace establishment may be considered as a change in, if not the commencement of our Military System, it will

be the proper time to introduce new and beneficial regulations, and to expunge all customs, which from experience have been found unproductive of general good. Among the latter, I would ask, if promotion by seniority[1] is not one? That it is a good general rule admits of no doubt, but that it should be an invariable one, is in my opinion wrong. It cools, if it does not destroy, the incentives to Military Pride and Heroic Actions. On the one hand, the sluggard, who keeps within the verge of his duty, has nothing to fear. On the other hand, the enterprising Spirit has nothing to expect. Whereas, if promotion was the *sure* reward of Merit, *all* would contend for Rank and the service would be benefited by their Struggles for Promotion. In establishing a mode by which this is to be done, and from which nothing is to be expected, or apprehended, either from favour or prejudice, lies the difficulty. Perhaps, reserving to Congress the right inherent in Sovereignties, of making all promotions, a Board of Superior Officers, appointed to receive and examine the claims to promotion out of common course, of any Officer, whether founded on particular merit, or extra service, and to report their opinion thereon to Congress; might prove a likely means of doing justice. It would certainly give a spur to Emulation, without endangering the rights, or just pretentions of the Officers.

Before I close my observations under this head, of a regular force, and the Establishment of Posts, it is necessary for me to observe, that, in fixing a Post at the North End of Lake Champlain, I had three things in view. The absolute command of the entrance into the Lake from Canada. A cover to the Settlements on the New Hampshire Grants and the prevention of any illicit intercourse thro' that Channel. But, if it is known, or should be found, that the 45th Degree crosses the Lake South of any spot which will command the entrance into it, the primary object fails; and it then be-

[1]These views of Washington's on promotion are quite different from the present current view in the American army. General Pershing could never have been prepared for his part in the World War if he had not profited, more or less accidentally, by the accelerated promotion that Washington advocates in this paragraph. See Appendix II.



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comes a question whether any place beyond Ticonderoga or Crown Point is eligible.

Altho' it may be somewhat foreign to, and yet not altogether unconnected with the present subject, I must beg leave, from the importance of the object, as it appears to my mind, and for the advantages which I think would result from it to the United States, to hint the propriety of Congress taking some early steps, by a liberal treatment, to gain the affections of the French Settlements of Detroit, those of the Illinois and other back Countries. Such a measure would not only hold out great encouragement to the Inhabitants already on those lands, who will doubtless make very useful and valuable subjects of the United States; but would probably make deep and conciliatory impressions on their friends in the British Settlements, and prove a means of drawing thither great numbers of Canadian Emigrants, who, under proper Regulations and establishments of Civil Government, would make a hardy and industrious race of Settlers on that Frontier; and who, by forming a barrier against the Indians, would give great security to the Infant Settlement, which, soon after the close of the War, will probably be forming in the back Country.

I come next in the order I have prescribed myself, to treat of the Arrangements necessary for placing the Militia of the Continent on a respectable footing for the defence of the Empire and in speaking of this great Bulwark of our Liberties and independence, I shall claim the indulgence of suggesting whatever general observations may occur from experience and reflection with the greater freedom, from a conviction of the importance of the subject; being persuaded that the immediate safety and future tranquility of this extensive Continent depend in a great measure upon the peace Establishment now in contemplation; and being convinced at the same time, that the only probable means of preventing insult or hostility for any length of time and from being exempted from the consequent calamities of War, is to put the National Militia in such a condition as that they may appear truly respectable in the Eyes of our Friends and formidable to those who would otherwise become our Enemies.

Were it not totally unnecessary and superfluous to adduce arguments to prove what is conceded on all hands the Policy and expediency of resting the protection of the Country on a respectable and well established Militia, we might not only shew the propriety of the measure from our peculiar local situation, but we might have recourse to the Histories of Greece and Rome in their most virtuous and Patriotic ages to demonstrate the Utility of such Establishments. Then passing by the Mercenary Armies, which have at one time or another subverted the liberties of allmost all the Countries they have been raised to defend, we might see, with admiration, the Freedom and Independence of Switzerland supported for Centuries, in the midst of powerful and jealous neighbours, by means of a hardy and well organized Militia. We might also derive useful lessons of a similar kind from other Nations of Europe, but I believe it will be found, the *People of this Continent* are too well acquainted with the Merits of the subject to require information or example. I shall therefore proceed to point out some general outlines of their duty, and conclude this head with a few particular observations on the regulations which I conceive ought to be immediately adopted by the States at the instance & recommendation of Congress.

It may be laid down, as a primary position, and the basis of our system, that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defence of it, and consequently that the Citizens of America (with a few legal and official exceptions) from 18 to 50 years of age should be borne on the Militia Rolls, provided with uniform Arms, and so far accustomed to the use of them, that the Total strength of the Country might be called forth at a short Notice on any very interesting emergency, for these purposes they ought to be duly organized into Commands of the same formation; (it is not of *very* great importance, whether the Regiments are large or small, provided a sameness prevails in the strength and composition of them and I do not know that a better establishment, than that under which the Continental Troops now are, can be adopted.) They ought to be

regularly mustered and trained, and to have their Arms and accoutrements inspected at certain appointed times, not less than once or twice in the course of every year, but as it is obvious, amongst such a Multitude of People (who may indeed be useful for temporary service) there must be a great number, who from domestic circumstances, bodily defects, natural awkwardness or disinclination, can never acquire the habits of Soldiers; but on the contrary will injure the appearance of any body of Troops to which they are attached, and as there are a sufficient proportion of able bodied young Men, between the age of 18 and 25, who, from a natural fondness for Military parade (which passion is almost ever prevalent at that period of life) might easily be enlisted or drafted to form a Corps in every State, capable of resisting any sudden impression which might be attempted by a foreign Enemy, while the remainder of the National forces would have time to assemble and make preparations for the Field. I would wish therefore, that the former, being considered as a *dernier resort*, reserved for some great occasion, a judicious system might be adopted for forming and placing the latter on the best possible Establishment, and that while the men of this description shall be viewed as the Van and flower of the American Forces, ever ready for action and zealous to be employed whenever it may become necessary in the service of their Country; they should meet with such exemptions, privileges or distinctions, as might tend to keep alive a true Military pride, a nice sense of honour, and a patriotic regard for the public. Such sentiments, indeed, ought to be instilled into our Youth, with their earliest years, to be cherished and inculcated as frequently & forcibly as possible.

It is not for me to decide positively, whether it will be ultimately most interesting to the happiness and safety of the United States, to form this Class of Soldiers into a kind of Continental Militia, selecting every 10th, 15th or 20th Man from the Rolls of each State for the purpose; organizing, officering and commissioning those Corps upon the same principle as is now practiced in the Continental Army. Whether it will be best to comprehend in this body, all the Men fit for service between some given ages and no others,

for example between 18 and 25 or some similar description, or whether it will be preferable in every Regiment of the proposed Establishment to have one additional Company inlisted or drafted from the best Men for 3, 5, or 7 Years and distinguished by the name of the additional or Light Infantry Company, always to be kept complete. These Companies might then be drawn together occasionally and formed into particular Battalions or Regiments under Field Officers appointed for that Service. One or other of these plans I think will be found indispensably necessary, if we are in earnest to have an efficient force ready for action at a moments warning. And I cannot conceal my private sentiment, that the formation of additional, or light Companies will be most consistent with the genius of our Countrymen and perhaps in their opinion most consonant to the spirit of our Constitution.

I shall not contend for names or forms, it will be altogether essential, and it will be sufficient that perfect uniformity should be established throughout the Continent, and pervade, as far as possible, every Corps, whether of standing Troops or Militia, and of whatever denomination they may be. To avoid the confusion of a contrary practice, and to produce the happy consequences which will attend a uniform system of Service, in case Troops from the different parts of the Continent shall ever be brought to act together again, I would beg leave to propose, that Congress should employ some able hand, to digest a code of Military Rules and regulations, calculated immediately for the Militia and other Troops of the United States; and as it should seem the present system, by being a little simplified, altered, and improved, might be very well adopted to the purpose; I would take the liberty of recommending, that measures should be immediately taken for the accomplishment of this interesting business, and that an Inspector General should be appointed to superintend the execution of the proposed regulations in the several States.

Congress having fixed upon a proper plan to be established, having caused the Regulations to be compiled, having approved, Printed and distributed them to every General,

Field Officer, Captain and Adjutant of Militia, will doubtless have taken care, that whenever the system shall be adopted by the States, the encouragement on the one hand, and the fines and penalties on the other will occasion an universal and punctual compliance therewith.

Before I close my remarks on the stablishment of our National Militia, which is to be the future guardian of those rights & that Independence, which have been maintained so gloriously, by the fortitude and perseverance of our Countrymen, I shall descend a little more minutely to the interior arrangements, and sum up what I have to say on this head with the following Positions.

1st. That it appears to me extremely necessary there should be an Adjutant General appointed in each State, with such assistants as may be necessary for communicating the orders of the Commander in Chief of the State, making the details, collecting the Returns & performing every other duty incident to that office. A duplicate of the Annual Returns should always be lodged in the War Office by the 25th of Dec. in every year, for the information of Congress; with any other reports that may be judged expedient. The Adjutant Generals and Assistants to be considered as the deputies of the Inspector General, and to assist him in carrying the system of Discipline into effect.

2d. That every Militia Officer should make himself acquainted with the plan of Discipline, within a limited time, or forfeit his commission, for it is in vain to expect the improvement of the Men, while the Officers remain ignorant, which many of them will do, unless Government will make and enforce such a Regulation.

3dly. That the formation of the Troops ought to be perfectly simple and entirely uniform, for example each Regiment should be composed of two Battalions, each Battalion to consist of 4 Companies and each Company as at present of

1 Captain	3 Corporals
1 Lieutenant	2 Music
1 Ensign	65 Privates
5 Sergeants	

Two Battalions should form a Regiment, four Regts. a Brigade and two Brigades a Division. This might be the general formation; but as I before observed, I conceive it will be eligible to select from the district forming a Regiment, the flower of the young Men to compose an additional or light Company to every Regiment, for the purposes before specified, which undoubtedly ought to be the case unless something like a Continental Militia shall be instituted. To each Division two Troops of Cavalry and two Companies of Artillery might also be annexed, but no Independent or Volunteer Companies foreign to the Establishment should be tolerated.

4thly. It is also indispensable that such a proportion of the Militia (under whatever discription they are comprehended) as are always to be held in readiness for service, nearly in the same manner the Minute Men formerly were, should be exercised at least from 12 to 25 days in a year, part of the time in Company, part in Battalion and part in Brigade, in the latter case, by forming a Camp, their Discipline would be greatly promoted, and their Ideas raised, as near as possible, to real service; Twenty five days might be divided thus, ten days for training in squads, half Companies and Companies, ten in Battalion and five in Brigade.

5thly. While in the Field or on actual duty, there should not only be a compensation for the time thus spent, but a full allowance of Provisions, Straw, Camp Equipage, &c; it is also of so great consequence that there should be, a perfect similarity in the Arms and Accoutrements, that they ought to be furnished, in the first instance by the public, if they cannot be obtained in any other way, some kind of Regimentals or Uniform Clothing (however cheap or course they may be) are also highly requisite and should be provided for such occasions. Nor is it unimportant that every Article should be stamped with the appearance of regularity; and especially that all the articles of public property should be numbered, marked or branded with the name of the Regiment or Corps that they may be properly accounted for.

6thly. In addition to the Continental Arsenals, which will

be treated of under the next head. Every State ought to Establish Magazines of its own, containing Arms, Accoutrements, Ammunition, all kinds of Camp Equipage and Warlike Stores, and from which the Militia or any part of them should be supplied whenever they are called into the Field.

7thly. It is likewise much to be wished, that it might be made agreeable to Officers who have served in the Army, to accept Commands in the Militia; that they might be appointed to them so far as can be done without creating uneasiness and jealousy, and that the principle Characters in the Community would give a countenance to Military improvements, by being present at public reviews and Exhibitions, and by bringing into estimation amongst their fellow Citizens, those who appear fond of cultivating Military knowledge and who excel in the Exercises of Arms. By giving such a tone to our Establishment; by making it universally reputable to bear Arms & disgraceful to decline having a share in the performance of Military duties; in fine, by keeping up in Peace "a well regulated, and disciplined Militia," we shall take the fairest and best method to preserve, for a long time to come, the happiness, dignity and Independence of our Country.

With regard to the third Head in Contemplation, to wit, the "Establishment of Arsenals of all kinds of Military Stores," I will only observe, that having some time since seen a plan of the Secretary at War, which went fully into the discussion of this branch of arrangement, and appeared (as well as I can, at this time recollect) to be in general perfectly well-founded, little more need be said on the subject, especially as I have been given to understand the plan has been lately considerably improved and laid before Congress for their approbation; and indeed there is only one or two points in which I could wish to suggest any alteration.

According to my recollection, five grand Magazines are proposed by the Secretary at War, one of which to be fixed at West Point. Now, as West Point is considered not only by our selves, but by all who have the least knowledge of the Country, as a post of the greatest importance, as it may in

time of Peace, from its situation on the Water be somewhat obnoxious to surprise or *Coup de Main* and as it would doubtless be a first object with any Nation which might commence a War against the United States, to seize that Post and occupy or destroy the Stores, it appears to me, that we ought particularly to guard against such an event, so far as may be practicable, and to remove some part of the allurements to enterprise, by establishing the grand Arsenals in the Interior part of the Country, leaving only to West Point an adequate supply for its defence in almost any extremity.

I take the liberty also to submit to the consideration of the Committee, Whether, instead of five great Arsenals, it would not be less expensive and equally convenient & advantageous to fix three general Deposits, one for the Southern, one for the Middle, and one for the Eastern States, including New York, in each of which there might be deposited, Arms, Ammunition, Field Artillery, and Camp Equipage for thirty thousand Men, also one hundred heavy cannon and Mortars, and all the Apparatus of a Seige, with a sufficiency of Ammunition.

Under the fourth General Division of the subject, it was proposed to consider the Establishment of Military Academies and Manufacturies, as the means of preserving that knowledge and being possessed of those Warlike Stores, which are essential to the support of the Sovereignty and Independence of the United States. But as the Baron Steuben has thrown together his Ideas very largely on these Articles, which he had communicated to me previous to their being sent to the Secretary at War, and which being now lodged at the War Office, I imagine have also been submitted to the inspection of the Committee, I shall therefore have the less occasion for entering into the detail, and may, without impropriety, be the more concise in my own observations.

That an Institution calculated to keep alive and diffuse the knowledge of the Military Art would be highly expedient, and that some kinds of Military Manufactories and Elaboratories may and ought to be established, will not admit a doubt: but how far we are able at this time to go into great

and expensive arrangements and whether the greater part of the Military Apparatus and Stores which will be wanted can be imported or Manufactured, in the cheapest and best manner: I leave those to whom the observations are to be submitted, to determine, as being more competent to the decision than I can pretend to be. I must however mention some things, which I think cannot be dispensed with under the present or any other circumstances; Until a more perfect system of Education can be adopted, I would propose that Provision should be made at some Post or Posts where the principle Engineers and Artillerists shall be stationed, for instructing a certain number of young Gentlemen in the Theory of the Art of War, particularly in all those branches of service which belong to the Artillery and Engineering Departments. Which, from the affinity they bear to each other, and the advantages which I think would result from the measure, I would have blended together; And as this species of knowledge will render them much more accomplished and capable of performing the duties of Officers, even in the Infantry or any other Corps whatsoever, I conceive that appointments to vacancies in the Established Regiments, ought to be made from the candidates who shall have completed their course of Military Studies and Exercises. As it does in an essential manner qualify them for the duties of Garrisons, which will be the principal, if not only Service in which our Troops can be employed in time of Peace and besides the Regiments of Infantry by this means will become in time a nursery from whence a number of officers for Artillery and Engineering may be drawn on any great or sudden occasion.

Of so great importance is it to preserve the knowledge which has been acquired thro' the various stages of a long and arduous service, that I cannot conclude without repeating the necessity of the proposed Institution, unless we intend to let the Science become extinct, and to depend entirely upon the Foreigners for their friendly aid, if ever we should again be involved in Hostility. For it must be understood, that a Corps of able Engineers and expert Artillerists cannot be raised in a day, nor made such by any exertions, in

the same time, which it would take to form an excellent body of Infantry from a well regulated Militia.[1]

And as to Manufactories and Elaboratories it is my opinion, that if we should not be able to go largely into the business at present, we should nevertheless have a reference to such establishments hereafter, and in the mean time that we ought to have such works carried on, wherever our principal Arsenals may be fixed, as will not only be sufficient to repair and keep in good order the Arms, Artillery, Stores, &c of the Post, but shall also extend to Founderies and some other essential matters.

Thus have I given my sentiments without reserve on the four different heads into which the subject seemed naturally to divide itself, as amply as my numerous avocations and various duties would permit. Happy shall I be, if any thing I have suggested may be found of use in forming an Establishment which will maintain the lasting Peace, Happiness and Independence of the United States.

G. WASHINGTON.

Newburgh, May 1st, 1783.

[1] In Baron von Steuben's plan for a Continental Militia which Washington approved the following year, 1784, he showed that in a "well-regulated" militia, artillery and all other auxiliaries can be formed and trained quite as readily as infantry.

APPENDIX II

THE PROBLEM OF PROMOTION

And Its Influence on Military Efficiency and National Policy

In his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" [page 386], Washington referred to the system of promotion by seniority as follows:

> That it is a good general rule admits of no doubt, but that it should be an invariable one, is in my opinion wrong. It cools, if it does not destroy, the incentives to military Pride and Heroic Actions. On the one hand, the sluggard, who keeps within the verge of duty, has nothing to fear. On the other hand, the enterprising spirit has nothing to expect, whereas if promotion was the *sure* reward of Merit, *all* would contend for Rank and the service would be benefited by their struggles for Promotion.

Notwithstanding the obvious force of this argument, the general rule of promotion in the American service has been the rule of seniority. Under this rule, except after occasional increases in the strength of the army, few officers are tested under the responsibility of high rank until they approach old age. As a result it has generally been necessary on the outbreak of war to replace the existing superannuated overhead by a new overhead composed of younger men. Most of our distinguished commanders have been young men like Grant, Sherman, and Stonewall Jackson, who could not have attained high command in war had they remained in the regular line of promotion.

A most conspicuous example of the importance of accelerated promotion as proposed by Washington is afforded by the case of General Pershing. On account of distinguished service, he was promoted from the grade of captain to the

grade of brigadier general when he was still a young man. His promotion was seriously criticized at that time as an improper departure from the general rule of seniority. And yet it is obvious that his subsequent development under gradually increasing responsibility was an essential part of his education for his place in the World War. Had he remained in the general line of promotion, he would have been a captain of cavalry until 1911, and would not have risen above the grade of major until the army was increased by law in July, 1916. It is obvious that, with that background, he could not have been considered for the supreme command in France. And it is, perhaps, equally obvious that he would not have been prepared for it. The actual Pershing that Secretary Baker selected had already been tested as a distinguished general officer for eleven years. And it was during those eleven years that his native abilities and character were gradually refined for the supreme test of great military responsibility. But even the limited scope of selection that enabled President Roosevelt to appoint Captain Pershing in 1906 has since been greatly curtailed. Under present law, the President must make his selections from among officers in the grade of colonel—and to the grade of colonel, the rigid and irrational rule of seniority still prevails.

But Washington referred to only one evil in the system of promotion by seniority. He was concerned at its tendency to prevent the rise of able officers to positions of responsibility while still in their prime. Here he considered the purely military efficiency of the service alone.

But our existing promotion system has had another adverse influence in the evolution of our national defence system. With little or no opportunity for officers to attain accelerated promotion as a reward for merit, they have been able to find it only in legislative increases of the army. For more than a hundred years their interests have been encouraged by proposals to increase the army and discouraged by proposals to reduce it. The individual stimulus that Washington favored was thus replaced by a solidarity of interest in service expansion. The question of military organization which should be determined solely by the public interest thus became

largely a question of class legislation. And the very men who were educated and maintained by the government to advise it on military affairs were necessarily influenced by the special interests of the group to which they belonged. To expect anything else, in the circumstances, would be to expect them to be more than human.

The effect of this influence can be seen in the army reorganization proposed by John C. Calhoun in 1820. Since the War of 1812, the authorized strength of the regular artillery had been 275 officers and 4971 enlisted men, and the authorized strength of the regular infantry had been 297 officers and 7065 enlisted men. In 1820 it became necessary for the War Department, in response to a resolution of Congress, to propose a new organization of these two arms with a combined enlisted strength of 6000 men.

If the War Department had included in its plan a sound organization of the militia such as Washington, Steuben, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison had repeatedly proposed, there could have been no sound military objection to reducing the regular army to 6000 men. With a "well-regulated militia," such a force would have been quite sufficient for the peace-time needs of the country. The solution in this case would have been simple. The War Department must have proposed what Congress evidently expected, a new establishment just half the size of the existing establishment with half as many enlisted men and half as many officers.

But the actual problem was not so simple. The Secretary of War, being a civilian, could not solve so technical a problem himself. He had to rely upon the professional advice of the army officers in the War Department. These gentlemen were unable to adopt the obvious solution. They proposed to reduce the number of enlisted men substantially as Congress directed, but they decided to retain the full number of commissioned officers.[1]

The proposed organization was supported, as we have

[1]There was a slight apparent reduction. They proposed to drop ten third lieutenants and twenty cadets who were carried in the existing organization of the artillery. But they proposed no reduction in the number of officers *above* the grade of third lieutenant.

seen in Chapter XIII, by a plausible scheme for an expansible standing army. In the event of an emergency, the small skeleton companies would be prepared for war by diluting them with raw recruits. And further to justify the principle of standing army expansion, the worthlessness of militia for national defence was carefully stressed and exploited. Thus, in order to avoid reducing the number of army officers, Mr. Calhoun's military advisers found it necessary to delude him and themselves with an utterly fallacious military policy. Though Congress did not adopt this remarkable plan, its influence still survives after more than a century.

In proposing to reduce the army in 1820, Congress was dealing with a problem in human nature as well as a problem in military organization and national economy. Suppose some member of Congress had been shrewd enough to suggest that human nature has its limitations, and that few men can face a scientific problem in a strictly scientific spirit when the correct solution of that problem will probably deprive them of their position in society and their livelihood. Suppose that Congress, accepting this hint, had announced in advance that it would make a generous provision for as many faithful officers as might be displaced by the new organization. This might have been given in the form of a gratuity or a donation of public land or a liberal pension for the older officers. Such an expenditure would have been trifling compared with the larger public savings. A few thousand dollars expended for a few years in this way then would have saved millions, nay, billions, of dollars in our subsequent history. But even more important, a very natural human fear need not have grown into a propaganda of sophistry.

And strange to say we are still confronted by this same problem in human nature. The demands of national economy and humanity's urge for peace both threaten to reduce the number of professional officers in the military and naval establishments of the world. Here the highest interests of humanity are opposed by a subconscious resistance that rests, to a considerable extent, upon a very simple and natural human fear. Would it not be wise for all parliaments

and congresses to announce that faithful public servants when no longer needed in the service of national defence, to which they have devoted their lives, are to receive generous assistance in their quest of new and unfamiliar fields of usefulness?

INDEX

Adams, John, on militia reform, 126; on military education, 145; on balance of power, 347; on naval policy, 350.

Adams, John Quincy, on War Department under Calhoun, 142; Scott's insubordination to, 158.

A. E. F., birth of, 323; development of, 333–339.

Air Service, under the Washingtonian and Uptonian systems, 371.

American Legion, advocates Washingtonian system, 361.

Anthony, Daniel R., Jr., House conferee, Act of 1920, 364.

Antietam and St. Mihiel, contrasted, 213–214, 339.

Applicatory Method, developed by Frederick the Great, 42; brought to America by Steuben, 42–43, 81; its influence in World War, 214, 332, 339–340; introduced at Leavenworth by Captain Eben Swift, 294–297; developed by Major John F. Morrison, 297–298; exploited by General Pershing, 298.

Armaments, Washington's philosophy of, 100–101, 345–348, 354–355; not understood by Woodrow Wilson, 307–308; 343, 345, 348, 354–355; war-provocative and peace-conservative, 344; militaristic and non-militaristic, 344–345; defective formula for, in League Covenant, 353–357.

Army, Citizen, *see* "Citizen Army."

Army, Continental, *see* "Continental Army."

Army economy, John W. Weeks on, 98; Washingtonian and Uptonian systems contrasted, 369–372; complicated by personal interests, 399–401.

Army, expansible, proposed by Calhoun, its futility, 142–144, 399–400; as advocated by General Sherman, 144, 270; advocated by General Upton, 144, 268, 269, 270, 273, 275, 299; denounced by General Hancock, 145; advocacy of, retards preparedness, 305.

Army of northern Virginia, composed of citizen soldiers, 171.

Army of the People, *see* "Citizen Army."

Army Organization of 1820 and its futility, 141–145; influenced by personal interests, 399–401.

Army Organization of 1920, based on Washingtonian system, 361–367; made with participation of citizen officers, 366.

Army Organization of 1922, based on Uptonian system, 367–369; made without citizen army participation, 368–369.

Army, Regular, *see* "Regular Army."

Army, Standing, *see* "Standing Army."

Army, Territorial, proposed by Steuben in 1784, 79–81; proposed by Stimson committee, 314–315; adopted in National Defense Act of 1920, 362–365; established in 1920, 366–367.

Baker-March Bill, proposes a militaristic system, 341; rejected by Congress, 361.

Baker, Newton D., correspondence with General Pershing, 199; and the selective draft, 320; and army organization, 321; his war powers contrasted with those of Secretary Cameron, 328–330; selects General Pershing, 330–331; his war achievement, 338; advocates a militaristic army, 341–342; comments on Wadsworth Bill, 362.

Balance of power, America's weight in, 345–348; John Adams on, 347.

Barrack Book, Washington's, 19.
Beauregard, General Pierre G. T., 196, 205, 211, 221.
Bell, General J. Franklin, develops military education, 297.
Benton, Thomas H., 156.
Bjornstad, General A. W., 337, 340.
Black Hawk War, Lincoln and Jefferson Davis in, 148–149.
Blair, Montgomery, 207, 241.
Border states, strategic importance of, 222–223.
Boudinot Bill, introduced, 107, 110, 117; embodies Washington's views on militia, 110–113.
Braddock Campaign, Washington in, 105.
Brooks, Noah, describes Lincoln's military studies, 232.
Brown, General Jacob, 139, 142.
Brown, John, execution of, 174.
Buell, General Don Carlos, 219, 222, 242.
Bull Run, Battle of, Union defeat at, due to unsound military policy, 195–197.
Bullard, General Robert L., 331.
Burgoyne, General John, 39.
Burnside, General Ambrose E., at Fredericksburg, 256; chairman, Burnside Committee, 264–265.
Burnside Committee, its membership, 264–266; its exceptional opportunity, 265–267; convenes as Upton completes his study of Washington, 266–267; but receives no trace of Washington's constructive labors, 270; a great opportunity lost, 276–278; receives constructive proposals from General McClellan, 277–278.
Burtt, General Wilson B., 340.
Butler, General Benjamin, 219, 224.

Calhoun, John C., Secretary of War, 141; proposes expansible standing army, 142–144, 399–400.
Calhoun-Scott military policy, origin and futility of, 142–145; displaces Washingtonian policy, 144; transmitted to Lincoln, 270–271; sustained by Upton, 267–268, 270, 272–273; favored by Sherman, 270–271.
Cameron, Simon, Secretary of War, 187; his war powers contrasted with those of Secretary Baker, 328–330; receives war plan from McClellan, 205–206.
Carlyle, Thomas, on Frederick the Great, 43, 296.
Carter, General William H., important services of, 284.
Chamberlain, Senator, 362, 364.
Chase, Salmon P., detailed by Lincoln to form War Army, 187, 260; approves three years' service for volunteers, 188; has McClellan appointed major general in regular army, 192.
Chief of Staff, office of, created by Elihu Root, 283–285; difficulties encountered at the beginning, 291–293.
Citizen army, proposed by Washington, 55–57, 70; place of professional officers in, 64, 82, 149, 162, 260, 304, 305; in Mexican War, as described by Meade and Grant, 158–161; formed immediately by Jefferson Davis, 182–183; neglected by Union authorities, 182–186; lost opportunity to form, after Civil War, 259–260, 264–267; at beginning of World War, 303–306; advocated by President Wilson, 306–307; rejected by General Staff, 307, 315–318; details of, 309–312; in Stimson Plan report, 313–315; as finally formed for World War, 319–321; abandoned by Wilson Administration, 341–343, 361; its relation to world policy not understood by President Wilson, 345–348, 353–355; supported by American Legion, 361; rejected by the War Department, 361; favored in Senate Bill, 362–364; favored by conferees, 365–366; established in 1920, 366–367; injured by reorganization of 1922, 367–369.
Citizen officers, given representation on the General Staff, 365–367; participate in army organization in 1920, 366–367; do not participate in reorganization of 1922, 368–369.
Civil War, Washington's adequate preparedness for, 177–178; caused by unpreparedness, 178, 356–357; military situations, 1861–1917, con-

trasted, 178–179, 326–330, 331–333; Southern policy sound and Northern policy unsound, 182–186; South profits by not having a standing army, 200–201; North handicapped by having standing army, 183–186, 200–201; army promotion at beginning of, 189–192; Lincoln a victim of bad plans and bad advice, during, 197, 208–209; defective Northern plans for, 217–220; political genesis of, 235–238; Lincoln's interference in army organization during, justified, 244–248.
Civil War and World War contrasted, 213–214, 325–330, 331–333, 339.
Clark, Grenville, 312.
Clausewitz, Karl von, his philosophy of war anticipated by Washington, 100, 344; scientific authority on war, 225; on alleged intricacy of art of war, 225–226; stresses importance of political element in war, 226; points out essential qualifications for the head of a state at war, 226–227; discovers tap-root of war, 232; known to Carl Schurz and apparently known to Lincoln, 233, 235–239; philosophy of war as a phase of politics, 234–235; on offensive strategy, 243; on army corps, 245–247; Emancipation Proclamation and Clausewitzian philosophy, 247–248; Lincoln's Clausewitzian action, 257–258.
Clay, Henry, Jr., in Mexican War, 150, 162.
Clemenceau, at Paris Conference, 341.
Clinton, Governor George, 12, 15, 52, 147.
Concord, Battle of, 30–31.
Congress, Continental, impotence of, 72, 95.
Conner, Captain Fox, and German military maps, 298–299.
Conscription, advocated by Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, 354; two kinds of, 354–355.
Continental Army, origin of, 27; not a regular army, 27; the National Guard its modern prototype, 27, 56, 269, 316; vicious enlistment policy in, 34–39; state of, at Valley Forge, 47; and Steuben's Blue Book, 52; creed of, 54; demobilization of, 73–74.
Continental Army of 1915, 316.
Coolidge-Economy versus Washington-economy, 98.
Constitution, the, and the Militia, 137–138, 310, 314, 315–317.
Cornwallis, surrender of, 9.
Corps areas, anticipated by Steuben, 81; proposed in Wadsworth Bill, 364; established in 1920, 366–367.
Craig, General Malin, 340.
Creed of Continental Army, 54.

Davis, Jefferson, in Black Hawk War, 148–149; in Mexican War, 151, 162; Secretary of War, 165–166; controversy with General Scott, 166–167, 283; President of the Confederacy, 182; returns to wisdom of Washington, 182–183; relations with Lee, 199, 249.
Davis, Lieutenant Colonel Richmond P., 313.
Dennison, Governor of Ohio, 192, 201–202.
Dent, S. Herbert Jr., House conferee, Act of 1920, 364.
Dickman, General Joseph T., 331.
Disarmament, a principal cause of the Civil War, 356–357.
Drain, James A., 312.
Drinker, Dr. E. S., 312.
Drum, General Hugh A., Chief of Staff of First Army, 229, 298, 330.
DuPont, Colonel Henry A., correspondence with Upton, 273–274.

Efficiency records, 330–331.
Ellsworth, Oliver, 9.
Emancipation Proclamation and Clausewitzian philosophy, 247–248.

Farragut, Admiral, 219, 222.
Fields, William J., House conferee, Act of 1920, 364.
First Army, A. E. F., 229, 337–339.
Fisk, Harvey E., on military economics, 98.
Fitzpatrick, John C., 4, 19.
Foch, Marshal, on American achievement and leadership, 338.
Foote, Commodore, 220, 221.

Forrest, General N. B., his native military genius, 173, 305.
Fort Leavenworth, *see* "Service Schools."
Franklin, Benjamin, 49, 95.
Franklin, Captain William B., assists in forming war army, 187–190.
Frederick the Great, Steuben trained by, 41; methods of military study 43; invents tactical measuring rod, 43; his method restored to American Army by Eben Swift, 296–298.
Frelinghuysen, Senator, 362.
Frémont, General John C., 219.

Gaines, General Edmund P., 155.
Garfield, General James A., introduced to Upton's manuscript by General Sherman, 264, 270–271; thereby misled as to Washington's policy, 270–272; advises Upton to quote from official documents, 275; his advice ignored, 275–276.
Garfield, James R., 264, 270, 271.
Garrison, Lindley M., Secretary of War, 316; prefers Upton to Washington, 316–318, 365.
General Staff, introduced by Baron Steuben, 42; what it means, 42, 318; duties of, performed by Steuben, 41–42, 53–54, 73–74; as organized under Washington, 73–74; education for, contemplated by Steuben, 81; in Civil War and World War, 213–214; McClellan's limited knowledge of, 215–216; contrast between Lincoln's and Pershing's, 229–230, 249–250, 331–333, 339–340; lack of, during Civil War, 229–230, 249–250, 252–255; proposed by Elihu Root, 285; and problem of military organization, 286–290; defective training of its officers, 290–291; Root's General Staff contrasted with Washington's, 290–292; its mission and purpose misunderstood, 291–292; need for General Staff education, 293; finally realized at service schools, 294–299; but not prescribed by law until after World War, 299; ignores President Wilson's military policy, 307–308; ignores Stimson's Washingtonian plan, 315–318; in World War, 329–330; effect of training for, 332–333; Pershing's 333–335, 336–337; French, efficiency of, 335–336; citizen army officers in, 365; citizen army represented in organization of 1920, 366–367; not represented in 1922, 368–369.
German military maps at Leavenworth, 299.
Gerry, Elbridge, 95.
Gettysburg, Battle of, Meade's failure to pursue, 254, 257.
Giles, William Branch, 117.
Gilham, Major William, at V. M. I., 170, 174.
Grant, Ulysses S., views on volunteers in Mexican War, 160–161; in the school of adversity, 172; his estimate of Logan, 173; condemns Northern military policy, 183–186; his unsuccessful effort to reënter army, 191; comments on McClellan, 212; his own gradual development, 212–213; in command at Cairo, plans active operations, 219–220; appreciates strategic importance of Mississippi, 221; importance of his victory at Fort Donelson, 243; in supreme command, 257; understood military problem of democracy, 260.
Greene, General Nathanael, 12, 54, 172, 305.
Guillaumat, General, and his general staff, 335–336, 340.
Gulick, Colonel John W., 362.

Haldane, Lord, his military policy similar to Washington's, 83; his practical reforms similar to Root's, 333.
Halleck, General Henry W., recommended by Scott for command, 207, 218; capacity of, 217, 223; summoned to command, 255; withdraws McClellan from the James, 255, 256; as Lincoln's Chief of Staff, 283.
Hamilton, Alexander, requests Washington's views on military policy, 9–10; proposes centralized elective monarchy, 95–96; 121; conflict with Jefferson, 121, 124–126; views on "well-regulated" militia, 127.

Hancock, John, 51, 109.
Hancock, General Winfield S., denounces expansible standing army, 145.
Hand, General Edward, 12.
Harbord, General James G., 331, 334.
Hay, James, and National Defense Act of 1916, 317–318.
Hay, John, 230, 236, 259–260.
Heath, General William, 12.
Herndon, William H., on Lincoln's method of study, 175, 232.
Hindenburg, Marshal von, 328.
Hitchcock, General Ethan Allen, 166.
Hooker, General Joseph, at Chancellorsville, 256.
House, Colonel E. M., 346–347.
Huntington, General Samuel, 15, 147.

Intelligence Service, in McClellan's army, 204, 215–216, 251, 255–256.

Jackson, Andrew, commends his militia, 136; demonstrates its value at New Orleans, 137; on constitutional power over militia, 138; a typical citizen soldier, 305.
Jackson, Stonewall, studies Napoleon at V. M. I., 170; his unique self-culture, 170–171; a typical citizen soldier, 172; present at execution of John Brown, 174; trains Virginia's citizen soldiers, 193–194, 212; his equipment unique among his contemporaries, 212, 331–332; in Shenandoah campaign, 252–253; his death a fatal loss, 253–254.
Jefferson, Thomas, his conflict with Hamilton, 121, 124–126; apparent opposition to military organization, 125; repeatedly urged well-regulated militia, 127–129; urges effective preparedness for War of 1812, 130, 134; unjustly charged with responsibility for unpreparedness, 134.
Joffre, Marshal, visits America in 1917, 322.
Johnston, General Albert Sidney, 294.
Johnston, General Joseph E., 190, 196, 206, 221, 250–251.

Kahn, Julius, House conferee, National Defense Act of 1920, 364.
Kean, General Jefferson Randolph, 129.
Kirkwood, Governor of Iowa in 1861, 201.
Knox, General Henry, consulted by Washington on military policy, 57, 69–70; views on military academies, 65–66; Secretary of War under Continental Congress, 84; reorganizes army for Indian frontier, 85–86; plan for militia reform in 1786, 87–94; anticipates important features of Swiss System, 90–91; devises means of dispensing with regular troops, 91–94; appointed Secretary of War by Washington, 96; his plan revised by direction of Washington, 101–106; Washington approves his plan to dispense with regular army, 105; adapts Swiss System to American conditions, 106; reasons for failure of his militia plan, 107–110.

Land Armaments, formula for reduction of, 354–355. (*See also* "Armaments.")
Lassiter, Major William, 313.
League of Nations, its defective armaments formula, 353–357; attitude toward conscription, 354–355.
Leavenworth, Fort, *see* "Service Schools."
Lee, Arthur, 75.
Lee, General Charles, 52.
Lee, General Robert E., professional standing before Civil War, 168; offered command of Northern army, 198; deference to civil authority, 199; appointed Chief of Staff of Confederacy, 249; secures conscription law, 250; conceives Shenandoah campaign, 252; appointed to field command, 253; exploits Jackson's genius, 253; coöperation with Jackson, lack of General Staff, 254; his offensive against McClellan, 254–255; at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, 256–257; negotiations with Grant, 258.
Lexington, Battle of, 30.
Liggett, General Hunter, 331.
Lincoln, Abraham, Washington's legacy to, 4–5, 177–178, 209; service in Black Hawk War, 148–149; inherits

ill-organized War Department, 165–166; his genius for self-culture, 174–175; seeks the tap-root of every problem, 175; faith in the people, 175–176; ready for responsibility, 176; his military problem in 1861, 177–178; Washington's legacy not transmitted to him, 178; obscurity of situation before Fort Sumter, 179–180; vigorous action after Sumter, 180–182; reports his extra-legal action to Congress, 181; determines to create a war army, 181–182; given worthless plan by military authorities, 182–186; entrusts Chase with formation of War Army, 187–189; uses his extra-legal authority to put over a promotion scheme for regular army, 190–191; loses Battle of Bull Run because of bad advice, 194–197; offers command of Northern army to Lee, 198; victim of Scott's faulty military policy, 199–201; assigns McClellan to command of Department of Potomac, 202; receives McClellan's war plan, 203; misgivings on McClellan's assignment, 207–209; a victim of bad advice, 209; lacks general plan for conduct of war, 217–224; Commander-in-chief in fact, 221; his equipment for conduct of war, 223–227; treated discourteously by McClellan, 230–231; his forbearance, 231; seeks tap-root of war, 232; apparently finds it in Clausewitz through Carl Schurz, 232–233, 238, 247–248; similarity of thought in Lincoln and Clausewitz, 233–239; seeks solution of military problem of the democratic state, 235–238; calls conference on military situation, 241; wants to borrow the army, 241; orders advance on Manassas, but consents to Peninsula Campaign, 242–243; his strategy justified, 242–244; exposes fallacy of McClellan's strategy, 244–245; overrules McClellan in matter of army corps, 245; and is justified in doing so, 245–247; apparent comprehension of Clausewitzian philosophy, 246–248; genesis of Emancipation Proclamation, 247–248; justified in relieving McClellan from supreme command, 248; justified in interference with military authorities, 249; victim of bad military policy and advice, 254; finally jury-rigs a correct system, 255; true appraisal of his military genius, 256; seeks a general by trial and error, 256–257; first conversation with Grant, 257; directs Grant not to deal with political matters, 257–258; asserts supremacy of civil authority, 258; considers military organization of modern democracy, 258–259; his war burden contrasted with Wilson's, 326–330, 331–333.

Lincoln, Benjamin, letter to Steuben on Military Academy, 67; letter to Knox on militia plan, 108–109.

Lindbergh, Colonel C. A., a typical citizen soldier, 371.

Lloyd George, at Peace Conference, 341.

Lochridge, Major P. D., 319.

Logan, General John A., 173.

Ludendorf, Field Marshal, 326, 328, 329.

McAndrew, General J. W., Chief of Staff, A. E. F., 229, 331, 337.

McClellan, General George B., experience in Mexican War, 168; inspection of foreign armies, 168–169; what he did not find, 169; appointed major general in regular army, 192; campaign in West Virginia, 202; commands Army of Potomac., 202–208; popular confidence in him, 202; gives President plan for the war, 202–203; relations with General Scott, 203–207; over-estimates hostile strength, 204–206, 255–256; submits detailed plan for conduct of war, 205–206; assigned to supreme command, 207; assignment to supreme command a fatal error, 208–209; not prepared for high command, 212–214; contrast with Pershing, 213–214, 229–230; limited knowledge of General Staff functions, 215–216; fails to establish intelligence service, 216, 251, 255–256; lack of sound plan, 218, 221–223, 240–242; confusion

resulting from double command, 227–229; discourtesy to Lincoln, 230–231; shortcomings due to defective training, 231; relations with Stanton, 240; illness, 241; ordered to advance on Manassas, but secures change of plan, 242; comparative merits of the two plans, 242–244; lack of fighting spirit, 244; fallacy of his proposed *detour* in Peninsula campaign exposed by Lincoln, 244; over-ruled by Lincoln in Army corps organization, 245–248; relieved from supreme command, 248; slow progress on Peninsula, 250–251, makes no effective provision for defense of Washington, 252; grossly over-estimates Lee's strength, 255–256; his withdrawal from the James, 255–256; at Antietam and final relief by Lincoln, 256–257; endorses National Guard, 277–278.

McDowell, General Irvin, assists Chase in forming War Army, 187–190; on defective preparations for Bull Run, 194–195; proposes attack on Manassas, 241–242.

McKee, William R., 150, 162.

McKenzie, John C., House conferee, National Defense Act of 1920, 364.

Madison, James, urges well-regulated militia, 129, 140–141; proposes effective preparedness for War of 1812, 130; recommends several military academies, 145–146.

Maps, German, employed at Fort Leavenworth, 298–299.

March, General Peyton C., his great achievement in World War, 338; advocates a militaristic army, 341–342.

Marcy, William L., Secretary of War, 154; relations with General Scott, 154–158.

Marshall, Colonel George C., Jr., 298.

Marshall, John, on Colonial enlistment policy, 35–36; *Life of Washington*, 147, 259.

Massachusetts, Provincial Congress, 28, 31–32, 33–34.

Meade, General George G., criticism of volunteers in Mexico, 158–160; proposes a national military policy, 160–162; his need of General Staff, at Gettysburg, 254.

Meigs, Montgomery, appointed quartermaster general, 190; estimated Confederate strength, 216.

Meuse-Argonne, Battle of, 337–338.

Mexican War, faulty enlistment policy in, 152–153, 155; faulty organization of War Department in, 153–158; political factors affecting, 154–156.

Michie, Professor Peter S., *Life and Letters of Emory Upton*, 273, 274, 280–281; on Upton's researches, 281–282, 288.

Miles, General Nelson A., opposes Root's plan of reform, 283–284.

Militia, Washington's generals on, 15–18; Washington's views on, 22–27, 55–59, 70, 105, 387–393; political obstacles to reform, 58–59, 87–89, 121, 130–133; and the constitution, 137–138, 310, 314, 315–318.

Militia, "ill-regulated," in Connecticut and Massachusetts, 108–109; sanctioned by Act of 1792, 119–120, 130–131; state of, in 1808, 130–131; discredited in War of 1812, 136–137; at beginning of Civil War, 194–195.

Militia, "well-regulated," defined by Washington, 23–25, 55–57, 70, 388–390; Washington's confidence in, 55–57, 105; several forms of, 57–59; political obstacles to, 58–59, 87–89, 121; Steuben's plan for, 75–79; Knox's plan for, 86–94; provided for in Boudinot Bill, 110–113; and in Jeremiah Wadsworth's Bill, 119–120; killed by Act of 1792, 119–120, 130; described by Hamilton, 127; repeatedly urged by Jefferson, 127–129; and by Madison, 129–130; not discredited by War of 1812, 133–134, 136–137; supposed constitutional impediments to, 137–138, 310, 314, 314–318; Washington's plans for, omitted by Sparks, 146–148; favorable political situation for, after Civil War, 259–260, 266–267, 277–278; not mentioned by Upton, 263–264, 266–269, 276–276, 279–280; embodied to-day in National Guard, 370.

Militarism, Washington's remedy for, 100–101, 344–345; proposed in Baker March Bill, 341–342; as a cause of the World War, 347–348; League of Nations' defective remedy for, 353–355.
Military academies, three proposed by Steuben, 63; as means of diffusing military education, 64–65, 124–125, 146; Knox's views on, 65–66; Pickering's views on, 66–67; Benjamin Lincoln's views on, 67; Washington's views on, 68–69; first presidential recommendation for, 124–125; urged by Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, 145–146; new mission under expansible standing army plan, 146; Washington's model followed at V. M. I., 171; can train officers but cannot create leaders, 305.
Military education, Elihu Root's reforms of, 214, 291, 293–294, 332–333, 339–340; backward state of, before Civil War, 170, 214, 232, 254; development of at Service Schools, 293–299.
Military policy, Congress requests Washington's views on, 9–10; Washington consults his generals on, 11–18, at outbreak of Revolution, 28, 33–34; at end of Revolution, 55–57; summary of, as proposed by Washington, 70; Washington's letter on, to Steuben, 77–78; as proposed by Calhoun, 142–145; Meade's contrasted with Washington's, 160–162; Jefferson Davis returns to Washington's, 182–183; Northern, condemned by Grant, 184–185; Scott responsible for faulty Northern policy, 200–201; two contrasting views, 309; vitiated by personal interests, 398–401. (*See also* "Upton, Emory," "Uptonian Military System" *and* "Washingtonian Military System").
Mississippi River, strategic importance of, 206, 219–220, 222–223, 248.
Moltke, von, Field Marshal, 39, 169, 215.
Monmouth, Battle of, 52.
Monroe, James, 136, 138, 141.
Moore, Captain Dan T., 322.
Morris, Robert, 72.
Morrison, Major John F., develops applicatory method at Leavenworth, 297–298.
Moseley, Captain George V. H., 313.
Moses, Major Andrew, 319.

Napoleon, contrasted with Washington, 39; profound study of, by Stonewall Jackson, 170.
National Army, anticipated in Stimson Plan of 1912, 314–315; organization of, in 1917, 319.
National Debt, due to defective military policy, 97–98.
National Defense Act of 1916, defects of, 317–318, 322–323.
National Defense Act of 1920, its intent, 365–366, 367–368; intent defeated in the reorganization of 1922, 368–369; how Washington would construe it, 370–372; how Upton would construe it, 370–372.
National Guard, modern prototype of Continental Army, 27, 56, 269, 316; invented by Steuben in 1784, 79; as adapted to War of 1812 situation, 133–134; as adapted to Civil War situation, 177–178; development after Civil War, 266–267; endorsed by McClellan, 277; depreciated by Upton, 278; discouraged by War Department, 299; as adapted to World War situation, 303–304, 310; complete organization of proposed, in Stimson plan, 313–315; opposed by Secretary Garrison, 316–317; supported by James Hay, 317; under National Defense Act of 1916, 318; war organization of, 319; represented on the General Staff in organization of 1920, 366; not represented on reorganization of 1922, 368–369; how Washington would develop it, 370–371.
Naval policy, Washington's views on, 21, 376; John Adams' views on, 350.
New Orleans, Battle of, demonstrates value of "well-regulated" militia, 137.
New, Senator, 362, 364.
Nolan, General Dennis E., 331.

Organized Reserves, established by Act of 1920, 362–366; represented on General Staff in organization of 1920, 365–366; not represented in reorganization of 1922, 368–369; how Washington would develop them, 370–371; how Upton would develop them, 370–371.
O'Ryan, General John F., 312.
Osgood, Samuel, 9.

Pacifist, Washington a scientific, 344.
Packenham, General, British commander at New Orleans, 137.
Page, William Tyler, 110.
Palmer, Captain John McA., 313, 319, 322, 362.
Peace-conservative armaments, *see* "Armaments."
Peninsula Campaign, influence of McClellan's intelligence service in, 251, 255; influence of Shenandoah campaign on, 252; Lee's offensive in, 255.
Pershing, General John J., confidential correspondence with Secretary Baker, 199; contrasted with McClellan, 213–214; his staff organization and that of Civil War period, 229–230, 249, 254; exploits applicatory method, 298; how selected for command, 330–331; his problem in France, 333–335; at the French front in 1917, 335–336; his educational programme, 337; commands First Army, 337–339; his great achievement, 338; effect of his accelerated promotion, 397–398.
Personal interests, influence on military policy, 398–399; illustrated by army organization of 1820, 399–401.
Petain, General, at the Verdun front with Pershing, 335–336.
Pickering, General Timothy, statement of national military policy, 16; views on military academy, 66–67.
Plattsburg system, anticipated by James Madison, 129–130; as an agency of preparedness, 318.
Political military appointments, during Civil War and World War, 186, 190–192, 330.
Politics and war, inseparable relations between, 222–223, 225–226, 231; scientific relation between, discovered by Clausewitz, 232–235; similarity of thought between Lincoln and Clausewitz on, 233–239; the Emancipation Proclamation and Clausewitzian philosophy, 247–248; Lincoln asserts the statesman's supremacy, 257–258; and considers military problem of the democratic state, 258–259; in the World War, 339; military aspects of political science ignored by Woodrow Wilson, 350–351, 352–354, 354–355.
Polk, James K., President during Mexican War, 154–155.
Pope, General John, 220, 222, 256.
Preparedness, for the War of 1812 under Washingtonian system, 133–134; for the Civil War, 177–178; hampered by the War Department's attitude, 279, 305; delayed by Uptonian military policy, 286–290, 315–318; for World War under Washingtonian system, 303–306; President Wilson's plan for, rejected by General Staff, 306–307; adequate, proposed by Stimson Committee, 313–315; but ignored by General Staff, 315–318; as Washington would provide it, 370–372.
Professional officers, place of, in democratic state, 64–65, 82, 185, 260, 304–305, 320–321, 372.
Promotion of army officers, under army plan of 1861, 189–190; in 1917, 320–321; Washington's views on, 385–386; by selection, illustrated in General Pershing's case, 297–298; influence of, on military legislation, 398–399; illustrated by army organization of 1820, 399–401.
Prussian military system, rejected as a model by Steuben, 82–83; favored by Upton, 268, 272.
Putnam, General Rufus, 12, 57, 70, 71, 147, 266.

Randolph, Edmund, 95, 96, 124.
Regular Army, first intended solely as a frontier constabulary, 15; Washington's proposed organization of, 21–22; gross misrepresentation of Washington's views on, 55–57; never advo-

cated by him as essential to national defence, 56–57; as conceived by Washington and Steuben, 82; Knox's plan to dispense with, 91–94; Knox's plan approved by Washington, 105; in War of 1812, 138–140; dominates War Department after War of 1812, 140, 141–13; expansible organization denounced by General Hancock, 145; conditions in, before Mexican War, 149–150; at outbreak of Civil War, 181–182; serious consequences of expanding, 182–183; Grant's opinion on, 183–185; great promotion of officers in, 189–190; scientific measure of, strength of, 311; correct mission of, in Stimson plan, 313–314; improper expansion of, at outbreak of World War, 320–321; new legal organization of, abandoned in 1917, 322–323; in Baker-March Bill, 361; scientific organization of, in Wadsworth bill, 363–364; adopted in organization of 1920, 366–367; but abandoned in 1922, 368; most economical organization of, 369; how Washington would develop it, 370–372; how Upton would develop it, 370–372.

Requin, Major, French army officer, 323.

Respectably Defensive Posture, proposed by Washington, 100–101, 343–344, 356; and our military history, 343–349.

Rexford, military organization in, 28–29; effect of short enlistments in, 34–35.

Roosevelt, Theodore, 186, 288.

Root, Elihu, appointed Secretary of War, 282; sees faults of organization, 282–283; proposes office of Chief of Staff, 283–284; proposes planning agency or General Staff, 285–286; quest for correct national defence system, 286; defeated by discovery of Upton's manuscript, 286–290; his General Staff contrasted with Washington's, 290–292; sees need of General Staff education, 291, 293; organizes War College, 293; ultimate success of his educational plans, 294–299; influence of his reforms on World War, 213–214, 328–329, 333, 340.

Rosecrans, General William S., 219, 224.

Ross, Captain Tenney, 319.

St. Mihiel, contrasted with Antietam, 213–214, 338.

Schofield, General John M., proposes correct organization of War Department, 157–158, 283–284.

Schurz, Carl, a student of Clausewitzian philosophy, 233; did he transmit it to Lincoln?, 238–239, 247–248.

Scott, General Winfield, describes regular army in 1808, 139; his service in War of 1812, 139–140; his position in War Department under Calhoun, 142; co-inventor of expansible standing army, 144; influence of, on West Point and the army, 146; friction with Secretary Marcy, 154–156, 156–158; his political activity, 154–155; his false theory of military command, 157–158; 166–167; his insubordination, 158, 166; his tribute to West Point, 162; his sound strategy for the Civil War, 199–200; his faulty army organization, 200–201; his relations with McClellan, 202–207; retired from command, 207, 218; his military policy endorsed by Sherman and Upton, 270.

Secession, doctrine of, retards national defence, 131–134; prevented by appropriate armament in Switzerland, 355–356; encouraged by disarmament in America, 356–357.

Selective service, influenced by Secretary Baker's genius, 320.

"Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," *see* "Washington."

Service schools, influence of, on World War, 213–214, 298, 332, 339–340; Upton at Fort Monroe, 273–274; importance of, recognized by Root, 293; development of applicatory method at Leavenworth, 294–298, 332, 340.

Shenandoah campaign, Southern opportunity due to McClellan's faulty organization, 230, 252.

Sheridan, General Philip H., 157.
Sherman, John, 149, 167, 191, 197, 211.
Sherman, General W. T., follows Calhoun-Scott heresy, 144; describes life in the "old army," 149–150; sympathizes with Scott in War Department controversy, 167; dislikes politicians, 167; reappointed in regular army, 191; considers volunteers worthless, 191; commences serious study of tactics after Bull Run, 210; depreciates value of volunteers, 211; not educated for his war mission, 212; reads Upton's manuscript, 264; favors Calhoun-Scott policy, 270; correspondence with Garfield, 270–271; misinterprets Washington's military policy, 271; his endorsement of Upton misleads Secretary Root, 288–289.
Short enlistments, serious effect of, in Continental Army, 34–39; John Marshall's views on, 35–36; Washington's views on, 37–38; in Mexican War, 152–153, 155.
Smith, Colonel Francis H., at V. M. I., 170–171, 192–193.
Smyth, General Alexander, 139.
Soldiers, professional and citizen, Washington's views on, 55–57; relations between, 304–305, 311.
Souilly, General Pershing at, 335–338.
Spanish-American War, faulty organization of War Department during, 282–283, 285; investigated by Dodge Commission, 283–284.
Sparks, Jared, omits Washington's writings on military policy, 12, 71, 146–148, 259, 263–264, 287; in effect, suppresses Washington's whole record as a military statesman, 146–148; studied by Upton, 263–264, 267–268, 275.
Standing army, views of Washington's generals on, 15–17; Washington's views on, 21–22, 55–57, 70; not essential to national defense, 56–57, 105; Knox's plan to dispense with, 91–94; Knox's plan approved by Washington, 105; as proposed by Meade, 160–162; a disadvantage to the Union, 162–185, 200–201.
Stanton, Edwin M., relations with McClellan, 159, 240.
State, The, Woodrow Wilson's, disregards military aspects of political science, 350–351; a study of the state *in vacuo*, 351–353.
Steuben, Baron von, correspondence with Washington on national defence, 11–18; his professional standing, 16; trained for General Staff by Frederick the Great, 41–42; letter to Washington, December 6, 1777, 44–45; letter to Continental Congress, 45; reports to Continental Congress, 46; on situation at Valley Forge, 47; reasons for his success, 50–51; writes the *Blue Book*, 52–53; as Washington's General Staff officer, 53–54, 73–74; plans for military academies, 62–65; his conception of professional soldier in democratic state, 64, 82; receives commendation from Washington, 73; profound study of Swiss military system, 75–76; plan for Continental militia, 77–80; invents the National Guard, 79, 370; plan for a territorial army, 1784, 80–81; anticipates our corps area organization, 81; and General Staff education, 81; his plan of 1784, a complete military system, 82–83; solves the military problem of modern democracy, 82–83; his poverty after the Revolution, 84; his constructive papers omitted by Jared Sparks, 146–147; his National Guard solution not transmitted to Root and Roosevelt, 288; his General Staff contrasted with Root's, 290–292.
Steuben plan, how it would have prepared us for the War of 1812, 133–134; for the Civil War, 177–178; for the World War, 303–306.
Stimson, Henry L., constructive labors as Secretary of War, 313–315, 319–320.
Stimson plan, a modern expression of Washingtonian system, 313–315; anticipates organization of 1920, 314; rejected by the General Staff in 1915, 315–316.
Stony Point, Battle of, 53, 170.

Strategic deployment, at outbreak of Civil War, 222–223.
Summerall, General Charles P., 331.
Sumter, Fort, 179–180.
Superstates, their capacity to prevent war, 355–357.
Sutherland, Senator, 362, 364.
Swift, Captain Eben, introduces course in tactical orders at Leavenworth, 294; his tactical forms and their practical importance, 295–296; great importance of his services, 296–297.
Swiss military system, referred to by Washington, 23; studied by Baron Steuben, 75–76; 79; adapted to American conditions by Baron Steuben, 82–83; characteristic military organization for a democracy, 83; important features of, anticipated by Knox, 90–91; identical in principle with Washington's "well-regulated" militia, 106; a laboratory model of Washingtonian system, 106, 311–312; ignored in Wilson's *The State*, 351, 355–357; a peace-conservative type of armament, 355–357.

"Tactical measuring rod," devised by Frederick the Great, 43, 81; finally introduced at Leavenworth, 296–298; employed in selecting leaders for World War, 298, 332, 337, 339–340.
Tap-root of war, Lincoln's quest for, 232–233, 235–238; first discovered by Clausewitz, 231–235; not explored by Woodrow Wilson, 350–351, 353, 357.
Taylor, General Zachary, 151, 152, 155–156.
Territorial Force, British, analogous to Steuben's National Guard, 83.
Thomas, General George H., 219, 222, 294.
Thomas, Lieutenant Colonel Lorenzo, 187, 190.
Thomas, Senator, 362, 364.
Training camps, citizens', proposed by Steuben, 79; by President Madison, 129–130; as agency of preparedness for World War, 311, 318; how Washington would develop them, 371.
Training forces, separate branch of regular army in Wadsworth Bill, 363; economic advantage of, 363–364; adopted in army organization of 1920, 366–367; abolished in 1922, 368–369.
Trenton, Battle of, 40.
Trial and error, Lincoln's quest for a general by, 256–257.
Trumbull, Lyman, 207.

Upton, General Emory, his researches in military policy, 3–4, 263, 266–267, 273–275; but overlooks Washington's unpublished writings, 12, 263, 268, ridicules Steuben's tactical organization, 80; makes no reference to Washington's militia plan, 120, 264, 299; submits his manuscript to Sherman and Garfield, 264; lost opportunity with Burnside Committee, 266–267, 270; visits foreign armies, 268; cites Washington against his own policy, 267–268, 299; quotes Washington's symptomology of the militia disease, 268–269; but omits his diagnosis, 268–269, 299; and his remedy, 269, 299; his denatured Washington exploited by Sherman, 270–271; his researches over-hasty, 273–275; ignores Garfield's advice to cite official documents, 275–276; omits all reference to official military policy from Washington to Madison, 276; pessimistic about National Guard, 278–279; fails to find a publisher, 280; Michie's *Life and Letters of*, 273, 274, 280–281; his high standing as a soldier, 280; his book endorsed as a monument of research, 281, 288–290; with serious consequences, 289–290; his influence retards preparedness, 305; his constitutional heresy, 315–316; how he would interpret the National Defense Act of 1920, 370–372.
Uptonian military system followed by War Department, 289–290, 305; espoused by General Staff in 1915, 307, 315–318; embodied in Baker-March Bill, 361; hampers Washingtonian system since 1922, 368–370; more expensive than Washingtonian system, 369; how to establish it under the law, 370–372.

Valley Forge, Steuben's services at, 46–51.
Van Rensselaer, General Stephen, 139.
Virginia Military Institute, Stonewall Jackson at, 169–172, 193; a Washingtonian military academy, 171; prepares Virginia troops for Bull Run, 193–197.

Wade, Benjamin F., 207.
Wadsworth Bill of 1791–1792, 117–121.
Wadsworth Bill of 1920, based on Washington's policy, 361–362.
Wadsworth, James W. Jr., a military statesman, 120, 361–366.
Wadsworth, Jeremiah, a military statesman, 117–121.
Walker, Colonel Benjamin, 12.
War and Politics, *see* "Politics and war."
War College, established by Elihu Root, 293; applicatory method introduced, 297.
War College Division, General Staff, prefers Upton to Washington in 1915, 315; constructive work of, in 1917, 319–324.
War Department, dominated by regular army officers after War of 1812, 140; in 1820, under Secretary Calhoun, 142; proposes expansible army, 142–145; faulty organization of, during Mexican War, 153–158; General Schofield's reform of, 157–158; faulty organization at outbreak of Civil War, 166–167; follows Calhoun instead of Washington in 1861, 182; false policy of, during Civil War, 182–190, 194–197, 209, 255; puts over great promotion scheme, 189–191; retards preparedness after Civil War, 279, 305; faulty organization of, during War with Spain, 282–283, 285; reformed by Elihu Root, 282–286, 291–299; investigated by Dodge Commission, 283–284; its false objectives in 1914–1915, 305, 307, 315–318; during Civil War and World War, 328–330; its false objectives after World War, 341–342, 361, 368–369.
War of 1812, lack of preparedness for, unjustly charged to Presidents Jefferson and Madison, 130, 134; but due solely to lack of "well-regulated" militia, 133–134; "ill-regulated" militia in, 136–138; development of modern regular army in, 138–140.
War-provocative armaments, *see* "Armaments."
Washington, Judge Bushrod, 146.
Washington, George, his military legacy to his successors, 4–6; his views on military policy invited, 9–10; consults his generals, 10–18; his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," 19–20, 375–396; views on standing army, 21–22, 376; on naval policy, 21, 376; proposed organization of regular army, 22, 377–383; views on professional soldiers, 22; on supreme importance of militia, 22–25, 387–388; refers to Swiss system, 23, 388; his definition of "well-regulated" militia, 24–25, 388–390; misinterpretation of his views on militia, 25–27; opposes short enlistments, 36; on causes of prolonging of Revolutionary War, 37–39; his achievement in Revolutionary War, 39–41, his military views misrepresented, 55–57; relies solely on "well-regulated militia" for defence, 55–57; never advocated standing army as essential thereto, 56–57; outlines several methods of militia reform, 57–59, 389–390; his practical statesmanship, 58–59; his deference to civil authority, 60, 199; views on military education, 67–69, 394–395; summary of his military policy, 69–71; his general staff, 73–74; approves Steuben's plan of 1784, 77–78; chairman of Constitutional Convention, 95; inaugurated President, 96; his twofold administration programme, 96–98; entrusts financial programme to Hamilton, 97; assumes personal charge of military programme, 97–99; his prophetic Inaugural Address, 99; studies military institutions of democratic state, 100–101; his philosophic views on military institutions, 100–101; revises Knox plan of 1786, 102–106; approves

Knox's plan for dispensing with standing army, 105; his military programme before Congress, 110–120; its defeat, and reasons therefor, 120–123; his feelings under defeat, 122; persists in his programme, 123; proposes military academy, 124–125; conflict in his cabinet, 124–126; his military system adequate for the War of 1812, 133–134, 140–141; his record as a military statesman suppressed by Jared Sparks, 146–148; his military system adequate for the Civil War, 177–178; cited by Upton as a witness against his own policy, 267–269, 271–272, 279, and for a policy which he had rejected, 269–271, 279–280; his military system adequate for the World War, 303–306; his policy proposed by President Wilson, 306–307; rejected by the General Staff, 307–308, 315–318; worked out by Stimson committee, 313–314; his hatred of war, 343–345; a scientific pacifist, 344; his philosophy of world peace, 343, 348, 353–355; his remedy for militarism, 344–345; his philosophy of armaments, 353–355; favors conscription, 354; his system adopted in Wadsworth Bill, 361–364, and established in army organization of 1920, 366–367; but hampered since 1922, 369; how he would interpret the National Defence Act of 1920, 370–372; views on promotion of officers, 385–386, 397–398.

Washingtonian military system, like that of Switzerland, 106, 311–312, 356; how it would have prepared us for War of 1812, 133–134; how it would have prepared us for Civil War, 177–178; not discovered by new General Staff, 286–290; how it would have prepared us for the World War, 303–306; resisted by War Department, 305; proposed, but not fully understood by, President Wilson, 306–308; rejected by General Staff, 307, 315–316; worked out by Stimson committee in 1912, 313–315; supported by James Hay in 1916, 317–318; finally accepted by President Wilson, 317; made the basis of our war organization, 319–320, but hampered by expansion of regular army, 320–321; abandoned in Baker-March Bill, 341–342; its historical significance not understood by Woodrow Wilson, 342–348; and problem of land armaments, 354–355; as tested in laboratory of history, 355–356; urged by American Legion, 361; embodied in Wadsworth Bill, 361–364; established by General Staff, citizen officers participating, 366; more economical than Uptonian system, 369; how Washington would restore it, 370–372.

Wayne, General Anthony, 52–53, 120.

Weeks, John W., views on military economy, 98.

Welles, Gideon, 218, 220, 222.

Wells, Major Briant H., 322.

West Point, Pickering proposes military school at, 66–67; its original mission changed, 146, 212.

West Virginia, saved to the Union, 201–202.

Wilkinson, General James, 139, 200.

Wilson, General James H., on Upton's military record, 260; on Upton's researches, 260, 288, 289.

Wilson, Woodrow, Washington's legacy to, 4–5, 303–306; proposes Washingtonian preparedness, 306; his policy ignored by General Staff, 307, 315–318; why he did not compel their obedience, 307–308; what he might have done, 308–315; controversy with Secretary Garrison, 316–317; adopts Hay's National Guard solution, 317–318; creates citizen war army, 319; his war burden contrasted with Lincoln's, 325–330, 332; at Peace Conference, 341; ignorant of Washington's military philosophy, 342–343; ignorant of military elements in our history, 345–348; military inaccuracies in *Division and Reunion*, 349–350; inaccurate statement of traditional naval policy, 350; his treatise on *The State* and its shortcomings, 350–351; application of his

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defective philosophy to the problem of peace, 352–353; his inadequate theory of armaments, 353–354; influence on League of Nations, 354–355; overlooks military aspects of Swiss and American history, 355–356; effect on his world politics, 357.
Wolcott, Oliver, 97, 107, 131.
Wood, General Leonard, and the Stimson plan of 1912, 313–315; and Plattsburg system, 318.
World peace, Washington's philosophy of, 100–101, 343–349, 354–355.
World War, contrasted with Civil War, 178–179, 213–214, 325–329, 339–340; Washington's plan of preparedness for, 303–306.
Wotherspoon, General W. W., develops military education, 297.

Yates, Richard, Governor of Illinois, 172, 185, 219.
Yorktown, Battle of, 9, 54.

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